





20

GRAHAM HAMILTON.

Farewell old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales ;
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past, unhappy loves !
Farewell, my friends ! Farewell, my foes !
My peace with these, my love with those——
These bursting tears my heart declare,
Farewell the bonnie banks of Ayr. BURNS.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HENRY COLBURN AND CO.

CONDUIT-STREET, HANOVER-SQUARE.

1822.

PR
4857
L169r
v. 1.

THE Manuscript of these Volumes was placed in Mr. COLBURN'S hands two years ago, with an earnest injunction neither to name the author, nor to publish it at that time: having fully obeyed the writer's wishes, he has now the pleasure of laying the work before the public.

April 2, 1822.

GRAHAM HAMILTON.

GRAHAM HAMILTON.



INTRODUCTION.

THE political convulsions of the Old World, and the great prospects opening in the New, have of late years driven the unfortunate, and allured the adventurous, to quit the former, and to seek in the latter a refuge from calamity and a field for enterprise. In the year —, and in the city of —, two English strangers found

GRAHAM HAMILTON.

themselves by chance and accident much thrown together ; at first very reluctantly ; for they resembled each other neither in appearance, manner, nor character ; but by degrees their common country and language, the want of other society, mutual forbearance, and mutual curiosity, overcame the barrier between them, which difference of age and dissimilarity of disposition appeared at first to render insuperable : their habits became more and more intimate and friendly. The elder related without reserve to the younger the strange and chequered history of his life ; and upon his demanding in return a similar confidence

dence, the ensuing conversation took place, and led to the narrative which follows.

IT is strange, Mr. M—— ‘What is strange?’——Why, every thing in life : but the strangest of all things is your inexplicable self. Were your character delineated, and your history known, who would believe it? With a form wrought in heaven’s anger ; with the worst passions and principles, and the most shameless avowal of them, it seems you have passed through life prosperously,

nay, even usefully ; whilst I, born to feel with the most acute sensibility, am the lone miserable object you behold ; and have made all around me nearly as miserable as myself.

M.—Mr. Hamilton, allow me to say that vice the most daring, depravity the most decided, do not always cause so much unhappiness in their course, as results from an irresolute, inconsistent temper of mind : such a character is most dangerous, and generally incapable of giving or enjoying happiness. Yet you must not suppose that all is as calm here, Sir, as it appears.

I have but half opened my heart to you—yet I have laid open to your

view some passages of my life, at which others would blush, and for which, you say, I must one day account—deeds from which you infer that all within is worthy of this mis-shapen exterior. Be it so—Now, Sir, as we are alone, and must pass many long evenings together, I propose to you to return my confidence with equal candour.

Mr. Hamilton. — Alas, Sir, vanity will not permit me to delineate my own character faithfully; you, on the contrary, evidently feel no common degree of satisfaction in reflecting on, and even in relating, your own vicious pursuits; because your dexterity, courage, firmness, and decision, have always extricated you from

the calamities and dangers to which your misconduct had exposed you. There is nothing but pain and humiliation in reverting to weakness, inconsistency, and those errors which arise from feebleness of mind ; yet, if it be sincerely your desire—the dreadful void around us impels me, I acknowledge, to turn my thoughts to the past, even though I fear it will but excite your contempt. I cannot sympathize with you : you will not even comprehend my conduct. We have, however, no other resource ; for to me the present is insupportable, and the future without hope ; and since you know so much of human nature, and are so well acquainted with the world, I shall find some consolation in reciting to you the

story of my griefs, even though you may smile at them. Yet, if I fatigue you, check me; and if I am incoherent, interrupt me. If I dwell too long on those moments endeared by recollections of happiness, forgive me! But, alas! you, who have no indulgence for any human weakness, will lose all patience before we reach the conclusion of my narrative.

I possessed what is called the best of hearts—a dangerous possession, as it is generally accompanied by the strongest passions, and the weakest judgment. With many good qualities, reverencing my God, affectionately fond of my parents, and susceptible of the strongest attachment, I have ruined, destroyed, or estranged from me all that I most

loved; and am now left a sad and solitary being, without object or occupation, destitute of hope: and with the bitter consciousness, that the many sorrows I have experienced, and now endure, originated in my own weakness and imprudence. But enough. The narrative I am about to commence will prove but too clearly what you have already advanced—that a weak and irresolute disposition is often more destructive than determined vice. Yes—I am the victim of such a disposition; yet I may defy even malice to reproach me with one premeditated act of malevolence or ingratitude. In truth, I seemed born only to love, and to be happy. Why then was I doomed to involve myself and others in misery,

and to endure the bitter remembrance, that my errors and misfortunes have sprung from pure goodness, vivid affections, and a desire generally to win, to please, and to serve?

CHAP. I.

Mr. H.—MY name, as you already know, is Graham. I was born in Scotland. My father was the second son of a family once proud of their high descent and the gallant achievements of their ancestors, but by reverses of fortune driven into retirement and obscurity. Of my mother and the rest of my family I say little—it is my own history, not theirs, I am relating to you; it is enough to say, they were worthy of a better son and relation; but they could not have had one who loved them better.

In those who have been early disappointed in life, whether in projects of ambition or of gain,—who have exchanged the anticipations and exertions of active pursuits for the hopeless certainty of a meagre patrimony—who, with the habits and tastes of former luxury, are compelled to submit to the restraints of economy,—the disposition often becomes embittered, and the best affections of the heart are blighted. But my father had never experienced these trying vicissitudes. He inherited from his parents their circumscribed income, but not their schemes of ambition. In his farm, and in his family, all his desires, anxieties, and pleasures were centred. He superintended

his servants and labourers, and shared their toils. He planned and executed improvements; gently reprimanded idleness, and liberally rewarded merit. Of the cares of the world,—of the joys and griefs, the hopes and alarms, by which those beyond his sphere are tormented—he knew little; and that little taught him to believe that he should be better satisfied with knowing less. His children were promising; his house was the model of cleanliness and comfort; and two apartments, fitted up somewhat more luxuriously than the rest, were reserved, as he always said, until his younger brother, Captain Hamilton, should retire from the world, and with his daughter Gertrude fix his residence

in his native country. Captain Hamilton had lost his wife, his fortune, even the hope of advancement in his profession,—every thing—save his character and honour. These misfortunes had confirmed in him that complaining melancholy spirit which was in some degree constitutional, and he was continually employed in lamenting his disappointments, or bitterly inveighing against the unkindness of persons from whom in fact he had had no great reason to expect more favour than he had met with ; for man, in his relative situation here below, has little leisure for works of supererogation ; the strong impulse of necessity, and the imperious domination of selfishness, will always influence the conduct of the mal-

titude: they alone are wise who have learned to fix their affections on a few, and to expect nothing from those whose services they have not the power to requite.—It was not long before this disgust and discontent produced their natural effect on the mind of Captain Hamilton, and induced him to accept my father's disinterested invitation.

Never shall I forget the day of his arrival:—for then I first beheld Gertrude! —We went forward to welcome him. Captain Hamilton bore a strong resemblance to my father: the expression of his countenance was pleasing:—but my eyes were in a moment arrested by his companion. Yes, it was then I

first beheld Gertrude! She was at that time only a beautiful child; but with something peculiar in her very graceful and very gentle manner. I was not much older than herself; yet I instantly appreciated her superiority; as I embraced her, "She shall be my sister," I said, and led her to the rest of the children. Captain Hamilton seemed deeply affected with the kindness of my father's reception. He felt it with the same violence of sensibility with which he had resented the neglect and disregard of others. As he looked round his new apartment, he observed his mother's picture placed above the mantle-piece; and while my father modestly excused

himself for not making every thing more comfortable, and said something of his being afraid the furniture and bed were not to his mind, Captain Hamilton, bursting into tears, and falling upon his neck, thanked him with the eloquence of truth and affection, exclaiming “It is all too delightful and too comfortable, brother Jamie, but I cannot at this moment,—no, I cannot utter my thanks. Yet how different,” he continued with a sigh, “how different is this from Malcolm’s conduct !”

Malcolm was my other uncle, my father’s elder brother. Captain Hamilton could not, even when overcome by feelings of gratitude, forbear adverting to a grievance. He must complain—he

must lament. My father knew that he must, and therefore forbore to check him.

Now every family has its great man, whether he be a peer of the realm, a knight, an orator, a poet, a statesman, or a hero; still to that name his humbler relations continually recur with pride and gratification; and Sir Malcolm Hamilton was the great man of our family: he was to us the one existing and visible token of high degree. He was the link which connected us with the world—the world of fashion; and though he was a little ugly old man, principally noted for his riches, inhabiting, as we were informed, a miserable apartment in the very centre of the city of London,

yet we never heard his name without a consciousness of our importance ; and we seldom pronounced it but with a view to confound others, by informing them who and what those were who could thus familiarly speak of *Sir Malcolm* as of a relation. It is true, this great man had made money, as it was said, by little means, and had spent what he was obliged to spend, in a little way ; in fine, was a niggard—a miser. But what of that ? Miser as he was, he had contracted for loans to government ; and ministers, and even princes, had waited upon him, and courted his acquaintance. Notwithstanding the distance of their places of residence, and the difference of their pursuits, a certain inter-

course had still at times been kept up between Sir Malcolm and his two brothers, and we had all been taught to love and reverence the uncle we had never seen.

CHAP. II.

IT would be tedious were I minutely to describe our way of life, even after it had been somewhat diversified by the arrival of Captain Hamilton and his daughter. It was regular, peaceful, happy. The Captain, fond of narration, told his stories again and again. My mother, blessed with a spirit of activity, put every thing in order. My father, tranquil, industrious, but careless of trifles, saw with good-humoured indulgence the little errors of those around him, and was only stern when we any of us

infringed upon the laws of morality or the sentiments of honour. Yet he saw with alarm, in my character, strong symptoms of violence and inconsistency. He acted ever himself upon fixed principles : the duties of religion, and the dictates of a pure morality, were the objects of his reverence; and poverty with independence he would have far preferred to sharing with Sir Malcolm any part of his fortune upon conditions which he did not approve. He was proud even of his indigence, for he felt it the consequence of his disinterested rejection of offers made upon terms inconsistent with his principles. But, as he himself advanced towards old age, and saw his children growing around him to maturity, he

naturally became anxious for their future welfare, and in the care he bestowed upon our education, he shewed himself more ambitious for us than he had ever been for himself. My brothers and sisters, all in different degrees, made some return for this attention; but it was lost upon me. Wild and indocile, I struggled against discipline, and rejected instruction, preferring ignorance and liberty to accomplishments, rewards, and praise. Even my mother's gentle admonitions could not control me; and my boyhood was passed away in idle musings, visionary projects, and entire neglect of useful study. Early, too, I learned to dazzle and confound my own understanding by indulging the wild

wanderings of fancy and yielding to the impulse of passion. Not only did I not see things as they were—but I saw them as they were not; with an impetuous and unreasoning mind exaggerating all things, and turning them by the force of my own imagination out of their real course.

It may appear improbable to some, yet it is nevertheless true, that even in these early days I loved—loved too with much of the ardour of maturer age. This happens more frequently than is generally supposed; but happy are they who have not themselves proved it; who have never yielded themselves up to such feelings until reason has assumed the reins of government over the passions;

and happier, perhaps, than all, are those whom age has exempted from the danger of falling under the sway of such wild and furious masters. For me, I became their slave.

Children, however frank, have generally some feelings which they dare not betray even to their most familiar companions, and dread, even themselves, to define or to name: they consider them as mysterious enemies, who are continually impelling them to acts contrary to their duty; and they scarcely dare acknowledge to their own hearts, that they have ventured to harbour such guilty intruders. It is only by the most unwearied observation that parents can become aware of these evil tendencies,

and apply the most effectual remedy by early inculcating religious principles. My parents did every thing for me which depended upon them. My uncle undertook to be my monitor; and Gertrude, whose virtues and domestic habits had already made this deep impression on my heart—Gertrude became my chosen playmate and friend; but alas they could not discern the secret danger, the mysterious foe I had to struggle with. Their innocent minds could not even imagine the tumult, the ardour, the romance, which bewildered my reason and clouded over my understanding.

The gentleness of Gertrude's dispositions somewhat, however, softened the wildness and violence of my character. If

grief oppressed me—if rage disturbed me, the soothing tones of her voice calmed me in a moment, and changed resentment to a softer and more tender feeling. She felt for me but as she ought: my love for her was distraction. She was the theme of my early Muse, the object of my unceasing interest; the idea which engrossed and employed all the vehemence of my passions. Oh! that I might call back the mis-spent days of my youth. The time ——

“It is thus,” said Mr. M., interrupting the enthusiast, “that silly men make their silly lives as miserable as they were before useless. Your history hitherto, I acknowledge, interests me but little; you must not however be discou-

raged from proceeding: I have met a hundred such characters in my pilgrimage through the world. They were always, like you, Sir, regretting their past errors: and the very next temptation, when it occurred, found them as weak and as frail as the former. Proceed, however, I wish to hear what brought you into this country.”——Mr. Hamilton sighed, made excuses, but again was happy in being heard. For why? because it was of himself he was speaking.

CHAP. III.

GERTRUDE, while yet an infant, had lost her mother; and the delicate constitution of that mother, who had died of a decline, was visible in her. Though pleasing, she could not be called beautiful. She was not fair, as our northern maidens for the most part are; but her clear complexion varied with the animation of surprise, or the timid blush of emotion. Her countenance was naturally serious; her smile had, therefore, a peculiar charm. She was graceful without art; and had an unembarrassed man-

ner. To some it may appear a contradiction, if I add that she was reserved. The retired habits of our family were, in the first instance, the cause of this reserve; it was not, however, unbecoming; for there was an archness and playfulness about her, which was the more captivating from the circumstance of this apparent coldness. She was not accomplished; her father had not had an opportunity of cultivating her talents—yet she had the sweetest voice in either singing or speaking I ever heard: it was low-toned, rather confined as to compass, and the higher notes imperfect; but her ear was accurate, and her natural taste excellent. She had, what to me possessed a peculiar charm, a hearty

laugh, when she did laugh ; but it was not often that she gave way to outward emotion ; and if she wept, it was silently, and without much evident agitation. Her health was good, but she was not exceedingly strong. She was active, but ever feminine ; and preferred domestic and quiet occupations to those exercises which require agility, or display of courage. She was not a good horsewoman ; but she danced well, though without science. Above all, she possessed the rare and invaluable quality of a natural love and taste for reading ; a power of comprehending a subject, and of feeling the merits and beauties of a work before her nice discernment was struck with its defects. She

was a critic in the real sense of the word ; not one who, incapable of sympathizing with the writer, feels joy only in discovering and pointing out his faults. Her fancy was far from inventive : she was satisfied, therefore, with appreciating the excellences of others, without endeavouring to excel herself :—indeed, she had little vanity, nor was she in the least egotistical : and praise, which, if just, she received gratefully, she only smiled at if greater than she knew herself to deserve. I was not fond of reading, and that I was not, has been to me, through life, a source of deep regret. Those alone are worthy of being commended, or deserve to be heard, who have early enriched their minds with the stores of other

ages ; and such are, in general, not eager to display their own acquirements, nor over-confident in their own powers. Never can the taste for reading, research, and reflection, be sufficiently inculcated or encouraged. Very few possess it ; and the propensity gives to its possessor a superiority at times even over talent itself. The want of it daily shews itself, and, as we advance in years, nothing can compensate for the deficiency. The ignorant mind reverts continually to its own slender stock, and the same bare ideas produced and re-produced, from the same scanty provision, become every day more powerless, meagre, and insufficient.

“ Psha !” Sir, said Mr. M. “ I differ

with you entirely : it is not reading will make a man of talent ; but reflection, memory, natural sagacity, and observation. I know those who have read till I have been sick to death of seeing them read, and I never found them either wiser or wittier for their exertions : but continue, for you speak from the heart, and I feel, whilst you describe to me what you were, that you are telling me the truth."

As Gertrude and I were naturally almost inseparable companions, she soon became acquainted with all my ways and habits. Indulgent even to my errors, she would attend me with a gentleness the most winning, with a patience and sweetness which never wearied ; and

though she was fond of conversing with me, she would, at times, pass hours without uttering a word, lest she should disturb me. How few there are who know this art!—the repose of a mind perfectly disinterested, and amiably endeavouring to adapt itself to the feelings of others. How invaluable such a companion! The unclouded temper—the cheerful, but not noisy, obtrusive gaiety of a young mind—the ever-ready sympathy which affection alone can give—the faithful, constant spirit that knows not how to change—Such a friend was Gertrude to me. But even in those days I had my wanderings, which, if she observed, she had but to recall my attention to herself, to sing her sweetest song,

or to smile upon me; and I at once felt my error, and returned to her with redoubled affection. Upon such occasions I was unable to restrain the ardent expression of my feelings, which she heard without embarrassment, because at that time she understood but little of their nature or their force.

In spite of all my faults I was much flattered and much spoiled. Every one seemed to love me; and I was so unreserved, so frank in my manner, that even strangers, in a few moments, became as familiarly acquainted with me, as if they had known me for years. The attachment which I appeared to awaken in others was always returned by me with an equal warmth. Gentle in manner,

slight in person, I yet delighted to follow the plough, to watch the sheep upon the hills, and never felt so miserable as when a book or a task was put into my hands. I was pious, and prayed fervently and frequently. No fears tormented me, and no sin polluted me. I heard the Bible read with reverence; and when Gertrude sang a hymn of praise to the Creator, my soul seemed raised with her's to heaven. I dwell the longer upon these feelings, as, though I was an idle, wandering unruly boy, ever writing crude sonnets to love, the mountain-lark, and Gertrude;—never applying to study —never endeavouring to fix steadily in my mind even one useful principle; still there was something of a higher spirit

in me—a gleam of genius and feeling, of enthusiastic hope, and honourable ambition.

M. “If you still possess any of your poetical rhapsodies, Sir, I should be glad to see them: uncouth as I appear, I love poetry; particularly if it is breathed from the heart.”

Mr. H. “I regret that I have nothing to give you; what I wrote I lost. Some lines of mine, however, occasioned me no small change of fortune—they were written on liberty and independence: they had been sent, in the pride of my uncle Richard’s heart, to Sir Malcolm, with my father’s yearly present of grouse; and, contrary to the expectations of the Captain, Sir Malcolm sent

me in return some valuable books, and commended the poetry in warm and cordial terms. He ended his letter by informing my father that he was about to pay him a visit, and, after expatiating upon the expensiveness of land-carriage, he intimated his intention of coming to Edinburgh by sea. This was indeed an unexpected and unhoped-for piece of intelligence; and my father and uncle lost no time in preparing every thing for the due reception of so great a personage.

CHAP. IV.

AT length, exactly upon the day appointed, Sir Malcolm arrived. We were assembled in the evening around the fire-side, listening to one of my uncle Richard's long stories, when, unattended, unannounced, and in the garb of poverty, Sir Malcolm entered. In countenance he resembled neither my father nor my uncle; his features were sharp; his form diminutive; his eyes keen and light-coloured; his manner cold and repulsive; his voice harsh, discordant, and abrupt. But when he

again beheld his two brothers, after the lapse of many years of absence,—when each of them accosted him with the familiar tone of old acquaintance,—when the sound of “Welcome, dear Malcolm,” fell upon his ear, it seemed to vibrate at his heart, and for an instant, a single instant, a benevolent smile, a flash of something like feeling, brightened his countenance, and entirely changed its cynical and contracted expression.

My father now introduced us, one by one, to his notice, and Sir Malcolm expressed his approbation of all he saw, in very cordial terms; adding, that when he had made a sufficiency, perhaps he also should retire to a cottage, and enjoy, in rural ease, the remnant of his life.

He remained with us a fortnight, and we had every hour fresh reason to like him notwithstanding the unfavourable impression his appearance and manner had at first produced. His shrewdness, satire, facetiousness, and an odd humour, which naturally belonged to him, pleased some of us so well, that three or four of the children declared uncle Ma'co'm to be a greater favourite than the Captain ; though we could not but all wish that he had a better coat, a good hat, and a new cane, for the honour of the family. Indeed, the meanness of his dress astonished even my father, who seldom saw any thing to wonder at in any man's humour ; but our surprise was still farther increased before he went

away, when he gave to each of us a little shabby box or case, which, on being opened, was found to contain either a watch, a seal, or a jewel of value, in remembrance, as was written in the cover, “ of old uncle Malcolm the miser.”

When he had departed, I learned that this visit, which had hitherto occasioned such interest and amusement to us all, had left behind it a subject of uneasiness to every branch of the family; for Sir Malcolm had made a proposal to my father, which it was deemed impossible to refuse, although there was great reluctance to accede to it. “ I have no child of my own, brother Jamie,” said Sir Malcolm to my father, before he left us; “ you have

many; and the eldest boy there, Graham, is like a troubled spirit, a will-o'th'wisp hovering over the dead waters of a morass. I'll take the laddie with me; he shall return once a year to see you and his little wifie Gertrude. I'll take care of him certainly; and who knows but that, if he behaves well, I may make him my heir? Hey, do ye hear, heir to Sir Malcolm! will it not turn his head, think ye?" "Ay, and I fear, his heart too," said my father thoughtfully. But such a proposal could only be received on his part with the warmest gratitude; and Sir Malcolm did not return to England without receiving his solemn assurance that I should in a

very short time follow him, and be in future considered as his adopted son.

As soon as this eventful circumstance became known abroad, I was, of course, greeted on all sides with congratulations. But, great as was the advantage conferred upon me, I knew as yet too little of real life to estimate its value, and felt nothing but dread at the great change of situation and habits to which I was doomed. I knew Sir Malcolm's sole occupation in London was the amassing of wealth ; and being at that time without either ambition or desires, careless of the future, nor gratified with the prospect of possessing heaps of gold at some distant period, after having passed years of painful probation far

from my friends, my country, and Gertrude, without a moment's hesitation, I positively refused to go to my uncle's. My father declared as pertinaciously, that I should at all events make the trial for one year, under a promise on his part, that if I found my repugnance invincible, I should be allowed to return home after the expiration of that period. The matter was fully argued: I maintained the liberty of a son to choose his own calling; he, the authority of a father. This set my uncle Richard talking, and the whole history of his life was brought forth, by way of example.

After vehement discussion on all sides, passions, prayers, and kindness from my parents, and long exhortations

from my uncle, I yielded, as all dutiful sons must yield. I should say, I obeyed, and at last resigned myself to become the heir of a wealthy uncle ; and, like many others, to sell my liberty, youth, and happiness, for gold. For this concession I received my father's thanks. But I sought the approbation of another.

No sooner was this arrangement finally concluded, than I met Gertrude ; she was in tears, and I wept with her. " You have done right in deciding to go," she said, trying to smile ; " it may break our hearts to part, but we are young, and we shall meet, I trust, some bright day yet." " We shall meet no more, perhaps," I answered, striking my forehead, and feeling as

miserable as if our separation were really to be eternal ; “ or if we do, I may be grown a miser, and you will hate me, Gertrude, or you will have forgotten me and your love, and you will marry another.”

My father and uncle laughed, and called me romantic. I felt confused—I felt hurt; for I had not thought they were near enough to hear us. Gertrude, however, without embarrassment, modestly and cheerfully assured me she should never marry, and smilingly said, “ If you grow an old miser, at all events you shall find me an old maid on your return.”

When we parted, Gertrude shed more tears than I did. She was, in fact, less violent, but more wretched. I

had been to her a playfellow, a brother, a companion; something she looked up to as above herself, one whom she preferred to every thing around her; and my departure seemed to condemn her to a degree of loneliness and dullness for which she was not prepared. In vain I promised soon to return—in vain I gave her my books, my flower-garden, and even my dog. Nothing could soften her sorrow, and she has assured me since, that she suffered at that time so much, that she often doubted whether her strength would enable her to support it. I said the same; but he who quits home feels less than those who remain behind. The hurry of preparation—the eager hope which will spring

up in the bosom—the change of scene—new interests—new ties, all divert the mind of the one, and prevent it from dwelling upon grief and regret; whilst every tree and flower, every look, every word, cruelly remind the others of all they have lost.

However, the moment of trial came and passed—we parted; and I set forward on my journey. My uncle Richard accompanied me part of the way to London, and, without any extraordinary adventure, I arrived, miserably dejected, though in very good health, late in the month of November, at Sir Malcolm's abode, in the heart of the City.

Thus ends the first period of my narrative. Thus passed the innocent, restless,

but happy days of childhood, before the trammels and tutorage of art had been laid heavy on the young mind; and to these succeeds the most mistaken, and the least happy period of our existence; a period, however, upon which the contentment of future life, and the success of all our prospects, for the most part depend.

CHAP. V.

SIR MALCOLM received me with much kindness, and laughed heartily when I expressed my astonishment at the early darkness which a deep London fog had spread over the day of my arrival. The ensuing morning he took great pleasure in shewing me the City; and was delighted with my admiration of its magnitude and opulence. But during the two dark dreary days that followed, I had full leisure, whilst confined in my new habitation, to reflect how useless to my uncle were the vast hoards of money

he possessed, if condemned to submit to the disgust and slavery of the life by which he had acquired them. — In what was he better than the beggar who sat at his gate?—“ Oh ! for Scotland’s hills and plains ! Oh ! for fresh air and Gertrude ! ” — I continually exclaimed, as pent up in a narrow chamber, and placed at a desk, I was day after day casting up, transcribing, abstracting and indexing accounts, bonds, bills, deeds, securities and documents of all descriptions, without the remotest hope of either terminating my labours, or being delivered from them. When I walked out, the immense riches exhibited in the shops around me astonished me ; but a dirty little man no sooner

saw me beginning one of these excursions, than sharply placing himself before me—"Master Hamilton," he said, "we must not let you out of office:—step in if you please,—step in." This was my uncle's servant—he was as meagre, as shrewd, and as poor in appearance as his master.—My room, the best in the house, was filthy; my uncle's was somewhat worse; and the place in which the clerks sat and wrote was absolutely intolerable. Dinner was served at five; a lamp lighted the dark little apartment. Every thing bore the appearance of pinching economy and distress.

When I first went out, the old servant was desired to accompany me; but my uncle himself often took pleasure in

going with me. A haggard woman and three children were shivering at the porch of Westminster Abbey, the first time I went thither. I had a few shillings; I gave one to the beggar; for she said she was starving. My uncle laughed, muttered to himself, and shrugging his shoulders, walked on—"Laddie, laddie," at length he said, turning to me, "take care, dinna gie awa' your money. Brother Jamie, and brother Dick, are ow're tender-hearted—and it had been better for baith, had there been mair o' the flail and less o' the flax in their composition. You must be mair canny—money's an unco thing. The world's a bad world; and they who keep siller can buy it and command all in it;

but when it's gotten from you, you are no better than a laughing-stock."

I soon found, however, that I had no reason to complain of Sir Malcolm, who was a singular compound of good-nature and bitter satire, and who liked to make fools and tools of those who surrounded him. After I had passed about a month in his narrow gloomy mansion, he one day told me he should have company that evening. Two gentlemen came accordingly; and, after discussing together some general subjects, Sir Malcolm, who always spoke in his native dialect, which I cannot pretend to render, turning himself to me, asked me, with his usual satirical laugh, what profession I meant to follow. Hesitatingly I answered, that

I had ardently wished to enter the Navy; that a farmer's life had nothing in it displeasing to me, but that after his kindness I must leave it to him to decide. Seating himself with great seriousness near his table, and looking at me for some time, and then at the two gentlemen, "Nephy, Graham," he said, "you know I told your father, brother Jamie (who's as great a fool, between ourselves, as ever I saw, owing to his fixing his ideas all in home,) that I meant to make ye my heir. Now, Laddie, what shall you say if I tell you candidly I have more wealth, more treasure, than most of those lairdlings and ladies whose fine carriages, as they veer about the streets, are the objects of your atten-

tion or admiration. I therefore asked you concerning your profession but to try you; for you shall be brought up to—none! But as you'll bear some day the great name of our family, you should receive the education of a gentleman; and this you cannot do like a barn-door fowl, picking up common things here and there, without proper instruction on the subject, which I have over and over considered. Now hear me with attention, and I will explain to you how in this world, and more particularly in this town, you will prosper; or rather how you may become what is called fashionable.

“ In the first place, these same nobles of this country, though they have lost

a' pride of character, a' courtesy of manner, a' dignity of carriage, yet are they greater monopolists than our neighbours the corn-factors, and keep those who are not born in their sphere at a very great distance, bowing attendance on their desires; and never suffer them to forget that they are in every respect their inferiors. But you shall learn how to become their envy. In the second place, as the steps to the throne of fame are many, and it is difficult to climb them, you need to hearken to the words of experience, and attend unto the precept of him who knoweth a new way by which to arrive at honour. These lairds of the creation address their heirs: saying, 'My sickly and sole offspring, I be-

queath unto you nae wealth, for I have squandered it all away; I bequeath unto ye, for an heritage, nae honour—I never sought it; but I leave you—a Title! and you are born a gentleman; however little any one who knows or sees you might suspect it.’

“But I, Sir Malcolm, thus speak to my heir: “Take money in thy hand—open thy house—ha’ the best of every thing.—And, first, as my Lord Chesterfield doth hold that the exterior deportment is of the most important consequence to the man, take care, Nephew Graham, to acquire an easy, and something of an insolent manner; look nae modest, nae sharp. Have eyes that see not, ears that hear not; and repress every

voice that would utter the genuine feeling of human nature. Learn neither to laugh loud, nor weep; say little, learn discretion, and, with little study, you will easily acquire that talent which knows how to treat of every thing as if you had read it, and understood it. Be, as in dreams, surprised at nothing; but try and surprise others if possible. Affect to be weary of every thing, and in time you will grow so. This is a difficult, but a material acquirement. Hate no one,—it is too much trouble: envy no one; but keep beneath the level of all that is good and great, and then they cannot clash with you in life. Aspire to nothing, then nothing can greatly humiliate you. Never love:

and whilst you assume power over every other, beware of putting yourself into the power of any one. Keep your own secret, but master that of your neighbour. Form no intimate friendships, but seek, as your companions, those you despise; associate with the worthless, and smile in pity at every sort of superiority. Call feeling hypocrisy, and sterling worth vulgarity. In speaking and in writing, cultivate a style of affected conciseness, acquire a ready command of ill-natured observations, and steer as far from truth as facts and dates permit. But beware of stumbling over such obstacles, they being like fearful sandbanks, so that a shipwreck upon them may put you to the neces-

sity of exerting yourself. Speak ill of others. Detract from excellence ; by destroying high character you will shine yourself the brighter : thus may you be a London ephemera, a man of fashion. This heritage, which lairds bequeath of right to their offspring, I bestow upon you by precept, and with it hoards of gold to keep it up with prouder state than they can. Yet a' this shall be done without making you pass ten years fagging at a public school, learning every vice, and every extravagance, with the cost and trouble their children do."

One of the two gentlemen smiled and accused Sir Malcolm of being very severe ; that one was Lord Orville, my uncle afterwards informed me ; the other was an

old Lord S——, whose son I had seen when once on a visit in Edinburgh, and who evidently understood not a word of what was passing.

Sir Malcolm continued: " You shall be instructed in fencing and dancing; learn to play with ladies' fans till you break them; swear that their pretty verses at least equal Pope's; and appear well acquainted with, and indifferent to them all. You must drop your enthusiasm, nephy, and assume a contempt for the great landmarks of learning; above all, talk of Homer, as of one you could never relish and of Milton's poem as a tedious tale, and taste the sublime alone in some novel production of the present day. Be over fond of Italian poets,

in particular if you do not understand the language. Lace yourself into the figure you may see passing, not these doors, but along the west end of the town, assuming all his airs and conceits. Speak ever ill of your own country. Buy yourself a house, and fill it with gewgaws. Spend liberally where it is seen, and keep a train of well-fed liveried lackeys to do nothing. Marry some young girl of rank, whom others love, and who loves another, but sells herself for your fortune; and let her be the only woman you treat with cold neglect. Boast of the attachment of those who have trusted ye, and if they trouble ye with complaints, break their hearts by your unkindness. And when

you have done all this, and a great deal more, you may pronounce yourself, Nephew Graham,—as great an ass as any in the kingdom, without a' that trouble they have taken to become so. And then you shall, as soon as age permits, stand for a borough upon Government interest—or, if it pleases you better, a county upon loud-roaring radical principles, without knowing or understanding one word of the Constitution or laws of the country. Ha, ha, ha ! what think ye ? And such a man, if the best tailor in London takes you under his protection, in matters of dress, will do—for what ?”—

Lord Orville, whose cold unbending good breeding had relaxed into a smile,

now shook his head, saying, "This is too bad,—upon my soul it is." I was then dismissed to make my own reflections on what had passed, whilst those Lords and my Uncle continued more than two hours in close debate; money was the subject. What Sir Malcolm had said when I was present, was all meant as a satire upon them; I guessed it not then, but he soon took the trouble of explaining it to me.

However, Sir Malcolm did not jest when he said he meant to make me a gentleman; and this being the case, I was immediately put under the care of a tailor and a dancing-master, my uncle's only orders being, "Form the young

man, and dress him. I shall send him frequently to your houses, gentlemen, and I request that I may never find him deficient in the two important articles, of dress and manner." Thus, to my infinite surprise, from a house the meanest in appearance, and by a person who seemed to despise and laugh at even cleanliness, I was given up to two ridiculous coxcombs, to torment me at pleasure, according to every whim and fancy that occurred to them. Nor had I power to order my clothes as I liked them, nor to refrain from dancing, bowing, and turning myself into attitudes which I detested. To these occupations were added the exercise of the riding-

school, a professor of fencing, a French abbé, and an Italian musician ; so that my time was entirely engrossed by this new course of general education.

Sir Malcolm did not, however, neglect to furnish me with the best books upon every subject. He would even sometimes read with me, and assist me in my studies, displaying no small share of literary acquirement, and still more of natural shrewdness and penetration. He encouraged me to frequent the theatres ; always, however, desiring me to walk home, and not take a coach, “for walking did laddies a deal o’ good—and coaches cost siller, and siller was an unco’ thing !”

Never shall I forget the astonish-

ment and delight with which, upon one of these occasions, I beheld Mrs. Siddons for the first time. To matchless beauty, to a figure and countenance formed for the expression of strong feeling and passion, she united a voice and manner, a general talent so much above the ordinary level of humanity, so equal to any idea of absolute perfection, formed and created by the most vivid imagination, that, even upon recollection, I cannot think of her excellence without enthusiasm. Lost in ecstasy—eyes, ears, thoughts, wholly engrossed—I was suddenly disturbed by a young man near me, who, in a soft tone of voice asked me whether I had never been at a play before. On my replying, “but seldom,”

he smiled at my agitation, and the emotion, with which I had attended to the performance; and then, in a jargon not very easy to understand he entertained me with innumerable anecdotes of the players, and displayed such knowledge of the drama, the stage, and green-room, as convinced me I had gained a most valuable acquaintance; which opinion was confirmed by his dress and the perfect ease of his manner. On our leaving the theatre, he expressed a wish to be more intimately acquainted with me, assuring me, that at the theatres, or any other public amusements, I could not have a better guide and companion than himself, and that he should be happy to assist my inexperience. “I

am," he continued, to my utter astonishment, "Lady Denmont's gentleman; my uniform I have been permitted to throw aside upon this occasion. I am, notwithstanding, now going to escort that lady to her daughter's, the Countess of Orville's, in Portland Place. If that is in your road home, and you will accept a seat on the box, for we have at present only a travelling carriage, it is at your service, and you may have a chance of seeing Lady Orville, the finest woman in the world, positively. She takes us much out of the regular beat; Portland Place is a most unfrequented quarter. Fine woman,—handsome house,—good property; but she'll be ruined, utterly

ruined,—poor young creature,—I lament to profess it. She is my lady's daughter—two years married. Too active a situation for me ;—had the choice of it, but preferred the mother.”

During this address, I had been felicitating myself upon the new acquaintance I had formed ; and the instant the gentleman ceased to speak, I wished him good night, and made the best of my way home.

CHAP. VI.

ONE evening, however, in rambling about the west end of the town, I found myself in Portland Place; and the name reminded me of Lady Orville. I had not forgotten my liveried friend's positive assurance that she was the finest woman in the world. An indefinite curiosity induced me to ascertain the house in which she lived. It was one of those fine evenings, when the moon illuminating the buildings, gives to the uniform streets of London somewhat of

a solemn appearance. The fresh air from the neighbouring fields differed much from the dense fog I had been in the habit of breathing in Abchurch-Lane.

There were, however, lights which soon drew my attention from the moon ; the pilasters and balcony of Lady Orville's house being illuminated with coloured lamps, and a cypher in the middle exhibiting the initial letters A. M. As it was yet early, this display appeared unusual ; and seeing a number of carriages surrounding the door, I asked the occasion of this illumination. " Lord Merton is two years old," replied one of the porters, " it is Albert Merton's birth-day. His little lordship gives a ball this evening." And I now heard

plainly the harp and violins, and soft-breathing flute, from the open window. Fragrant flowers decorated the balcony, at which a young and beautiful woman suddenly appeared, holding a child in her arms, and attended by a number of gentlemen. I could see her smile, and she appeared to me more beautiful than any creature I had ever seen. Alas ! thought I, why has fate placed me at a distance from this gay, this refined, this delightful scene? Upon these favourites of fortune, every good gift in life appears to be lavished. Yet, what have they done more than others, to deserve their felicity? Happy, happy, are those who surround that angel woman. “ It must be Lady Orville !” I exclaimed. “ Yes,

it must be the mother of the boy—the mistress of that mansion where all breathes delight and gaiety. Oh ! who so blessed as she is ; and long may she continue so !”

I stood gazing upon her, until she retired. The music ceased, and I heard only the loud laughing of servants and quarrelling of coachmen. I returned with my mind full of the scene I had witnessed to Sir Malcolm’s. That night when I slept my dreams were confused ; and I rejoiced, for the first time, in the thought that I might one day be introduced to scenes which glittered and allured from afar.

A few nights afterwards I again saw Lady Orville, it was from the pit at the

Opera-house; she then looked even more lovely than when I had first beheld her. The same troop of gay admirers attended her. I saw one, in particular, whose face I recognized; he had often visited our cottage in Scotland; he was my own countryman—it was—yes, it must be—Moncrief. He seemed now entirely engrossed by Lady Orville; his eyes were fixed upon her with undisguised admiration. But Moncrief was strict in principle; a man of learning and morality. How could he be the associate of those whom my uncle considered as wanting in every estimable quality? “No, they are all virtuous as they are beautiful!” I exclaimed;—and the soft Italian music, and the dance, which I

looked upon, confirmed me in my admiration of that class to which it was now my ardent desire to belong.

CHAP. VII.

IT would tire you were I to repeat my thousand boyish adventures—or to relate the progress that I made ; suffice it that I passed two years with Sir Malcolm ; during which time I was introduced to many whom, in turn, I liked and disliked, and whom I now scarcely remember. Lord Orville, the husband of the lady I had so much admired, was nearly the only person who made any permanent impression upon my mind. He, as I before mentioned, visited Sir Malcolm, not from inclination, but from ne-

cessity. He was immensely rich; and in consequence exceedingly poor. He had married an heiress and a beauty, and on that account was most unhappy in domestic life. Lady Orville was the admiration of the whole world:—the only person to whom she was utterly indifferent was her husband. Lord Orville was a man of a very peculiar character. He could lose thousands at play without a frown, but had no command of temper when forced, or, it might be said, awakened into exertion by any urgent necessity.

About this period, Lady Orville's unbounded extravagance had involved him in very serious difficulties—it was necessary he should raise a large sum of money. Sir Malcolm, upon proper se-

curity, advanced the sum, and Lord Orville had called upon him frequently during the course of the transaction. Upon one of these occasions he spoke a few words to me. He was fair, handsome, phlegmatic—his manners dignified and graceful; his dress little studied. He had a resigned, rather than a happy countenance; and a degree of cold, unbending pride made him difficult of access. The few words he said to me were, “ I understand from Sir Malcolm that you have a very fine horse : are you fond of shooting ? ” And upon my saying ‘ I was, but there was no shooting in town,’ he smiled; and the next morning an excellent gun was brought, as a present, by one of his Lordship’s servants.

I called some days after, to return him my thanks—I was of course not admitted.

I fear I tire you—I dwell eternally on trivial points—I must proceed. Lady Orville, my new gun, and all my London amusements, were entirely put out of my head at this time; for Sir Malcolm himself proposed to re-conduct me to Scotland, to see once again my dear parents. And he proposed that after having paid this visit, I should study six months at Edinburgh, and then return to London. We set forth—we arrived there, and after a prosperous journey, I found myself once more in my mother's arms, at my father's feet, obtained their blessing, and looked for Gertrude's smile. It is impossible to describe how all the other interests of life—pride,

vanity, and folly—vanished at that moment. I only felt that I was restored to happiness, and I wept for joy, as I gazed again upon each dear, each well-known face. “He has been a gude lad,” said Sir Malcolm to my father, “though he’s a comical one.” After some minutes, in which he had taken pleasure in contemplating my emotion, he added, “He goes abroad more than I approve; the theatres and the ladies make a fool of him—and his money goes something too rapidly. But still he’s a good lad, on the whole; and what I must say, he’s an affectionate and dutiful nephew, and he has made his old uncle very happy: and none of their gaieties, and none of their fooleries, ever once made him forget his duty.” “It was my pleasure,” I replied,

grasping his hand ; for, in truth, it had been so. I owed every thing to Sir Malcolm : and to hear him thus speak of me, made me feel that I had done too little for him !

My father was not apt to shew his feelings much ; but when he heard me commended, with an expression I never can forget, he turned his eyes first on his brother, then on me, saying, “ God will bless thee, my child.” The Captain said I looked better than when wandering over their mountains, and following the plough. “ And yet,” said Sir Malcolm, “ it was bad weather the last three months. But what’s odd, though nevertheless true, London fog never hurts any man. Certain it is,

Graham has made shift to live in it, and sing and dance — the madcap — till I feared the neighbours would think I kept a Frenchman in the house. But he's no Frenchman, he's a Scot, from head to foot—right noble, and gallant, as his great ancestor, he who died with his claymore in his hand, there, where Scotland's liberty and hopes were slain, even on Flodden's bloody field."

"Come, brother, leave all that," said my father, thinking of his rising prospects and increasing farm, "we were a greater nation, perhaps, in those good days; but we are a very happy nation now; and my opinion is, that people do muckle more harm with all those laments and exclamations, than they think

for. Graham's come home—to-morrow is Gertrude's birth-day—and some neighbours dine here: let us all be as happy and comfortable as it pleases God we should be; for the things of this life, grand or poor, must pass away. And if we are always looking back, and regretting the time that is past, it may seem like a lack of satisfaction and gratitude for the time that is."

My father's words and wishes were attended to, and my uncle enjoyed the three weeks he passed with us before his return to town. The Captain narrated his old stories: Gertrude laughed heartily at each well-known jest: and the laugh was the more hearty, I thought, because I was near; but she was timid and bash-

ful, and even more reserved than when we had parted. I described to her all I had seen. I told her there were many pretty women in London, but not one like her. I saw the colour rise in her cheeks, and her teeth, like rows of pearl, just shewing themselves when she smiled ; yes, I now saw she was a thousand times more beautiful than when we had parted. I could not disguise my sentiments. She was still young ; but not, I thought, so young as not to share them. Was I mistaken ? did love, in that peaceful bosom still sleep ? and were the blush, and the smile, and the brightness of those eyes, when they looked on me, the pure result of affectionate regard ? In me, the furious passions had awaken-

ed powerfully, and reason as yet dawned but with a feeble light on my mind. I gave way, therefore, to my attachment, and pouring into her ear vows of enthusiastic tenderness, I reproached her for her coldness, and sought by every persuasion, to gain from her the assurance that her heart was mine.

Never shall I forget the blessed moment when, returning home with me at sunset, one beautiful evening in the month of June, soon after my return from England; I who had been so long pent up from fresh air and liberty, doubly enjoying the soft warm breeze, gazing entranced on the green hills and rural scenery,—my heart breathing but of love—Gertrude was moved. Her

coldness was dispelled ; she looked upon me with tenderness ; she returned the vows I made her with a simplicity, yet with an air of truth, that is now seldom seen ; for now passion is the love of most hearts, and that devoted, that gentle feeling, which alone deserves the name, is utterly banished. It is the offspring of virtue ; it cannot exist with guilt or affectation ; vanity is its bane. It is all generous—devoid of all egotism.

Gertrude feared but to give expression to the deep sentiment she cherished ; whilst I made her every protestation an ardent lover makes, when he loves for the first time. We walked slowly on towards home. I entreated her not yet to return. “ It is late,” she answered, “ my

father will expect me." There was something sacred to me in these words. They were uttered with gentleness,—with nothing of punctilious formality, but as if an affectionate heart had breathed them. I even hastened home, partaking in her fear lest the old gentleman might become anxious. I sympathized with her desire to spare him one single moment of uneasiness, even though it snatched me from happiness. Yet no, that happiness continued. I was a new being. I was loved—I felt it—I had heard it,—and from Gertrude. She had renewed to me at a maturer age, and upon full reflection, the assurances of that affection, which had blessed the happy days of our childhood.

With what new charms every object in life was clad for me ! Studies, which had appeared dry and tedious, were lightened in idea, with the hope of improving my mind for her. Even my uncle's prison-house was embellished by fancy, when I remembered, that the fortune promised me would render her and her father happy. My spirits were above their usual height ; I talked more than the Captain. My father smiled with delight ; and when we assembled that evening to return thanks to God, how my whole soul breathed from my lips, and poured forth its grateful praise !

Before morning I arose, and, actuated by the same feeling, Gertrude fol-

lowed a few moments after. We wandered together till the hour of breakfast, and spoke of love and happiness. Less timid than the preceding night, she now confided to me that she had long felt much for me ; but had feared, she said, to love me, because I was so changeable, so overpowered by every emotion, so ardent for a time ; — “ and who knows,” she continued, “ how cold and distant you might become, if you should ever change ! This it is,” she added, “ which has prevented me from ever daring to permit myself to love you.” “ And how could you help it ?” I enquired. She smiled. I ventured to press my lips to hers—but oh ! I was sorry afterwards, for my feelings were

too strong, and Gertrude appeared terrified at their violence.

Strange it is, that a human being delights in tearing open the bleeding wounds of his heart, when time has in part healed them. Wherefore paint a life of innocence and enchantment, when voluntarily I forsook it? wherefore describe to you the charms, virtues, beauties of my Gertrude, merely to shew what a wretch I have been? Did I say I loved? I had it not in me to do so. Love is what an angel may feel for suffering man; it is all pure—all heavenly—all true. But my feelings were the overbearing violence of passion, not the warm and pure benevolence of love.

My imagination painted the delight of our future prospects. I dwelt with Gertrude upon our marriage, our family arrangements, my promised fortune. I talked with her of visiting foreign countries in a carriage, with imperials, trunks, servants, clothes, jewels, such as I had seen in London ;—of theatres, balls, and splendour. She spoke to me also of our union ; but all her thoughts turned to home, to rural scenes, to a cottage, to a farm, to a small library. She pointed out the beauties of nature, and awakened me insensibly from my visions of ostentation. My father marked us as we sat by each other deep in conversation, and the Captain smiled with benignity upon our growing attachment. When

my father exhorted us to virtue and to industry, his mild eye turned itself to me, and I felt but sentiments of gratitude and veneration for all that is holy and good. The dream was assuredly one of heaven, and as such, it left upon the mind an eternal sentiment of delight and peace.

The six weeks that Sir Malcolm had allowed, were thus passed, when the Captain, who knew a little more of life than my father, advised that I should return. "They are too young yet to marry," he said, speaking of Gertrude and me; "and though thus pledged to each other, I see it is an idle thing to leave them together. She is scarce fifteen, and he but three years more; he must go to Edinburgh, Sir Mal-

colm's wishes upon that head must be attended to ; and my girl, instead of hearing vows of love and nonsense all day long, must read, and work, and improve herself." I went accordingly to Edinburgh, passed there the appointed period, not without much profit and advantage ; returned to my home for one more happy week ; then tore myself from Gertrude, and rejoined Sir Malcolm in the old, dark, and dirty habitation.

CHAP. VIII.

IT is thus that short-sighted mortals, pursuing some delusive hope, alloy for themselves the pure blessings which Heaven has already bestowed upon them. Could they look forward, they would perhaps cherish every passing moment, pardon many imperfections, enjoy what they possess, and only tremble at the thought of losing it. I parted thus again from Gertrude. But oh! how different was this parting from our last. I now went with the certainty of a speedy return, and the knowledge that she was to be

mine. The Captain, before I went, gave me the assurance of his daughter's hand, if we both of us still continued in the same mind after my return. With such expectations I left her; and scarce can even say I passed a melancholy hour, as I set out for London in company with Frederic Brandon (son to Lord S.) who was still at the university; and Mr. Moncrief, the very person whom I had seen in London with Lady Orville, who both entertained me during the journey. Frederic Brandon had once visited me at my father's, and with something of an ostentatious civility, had made me promise, that when again in London, I would return that visit at Lord S——'s villa near Richmond. His rattling fri-

volous conversation entertained me without enlightening my mind, whilst every word which dropt from Moncrief, whether in jest or otherwise, shewed superior intelligence, natural quickness, and a thorough cultivation of most powerful abilities. How large were the resources from which he drew every moment deep and just reflections! How every scene, and even young Brandon's crude, common-place remarks, awakened in his elevated and instructed mind the finest and most original ideas! The long journey was but as a pleasant drive; and we almost regretted our arrival in London, for there we separated. Young Brandon went to his father's palace, and I returned to Sir Malcolm's hovel; but the hearty

welcome with which I was received made amends for all inconveniences, and I was too happy in my own mind to feel any mortification or uneasiness from exterior circumstances. London was to me no longer such as it had been.' To my new feelings it offered a new aspect. The reserve I had felt at first had considerably diminished; the novelty, though still sufficient to charm, no longer bewildered and overpowered me. My curiosity, too, was less poignant, having before been fully satisfied; and the delight which my uncle expressed at receiving me again made me, in spite of myself, happy and even vain.

Mr. Brandon's invitation, which shortly after my return, was formally repeated,

after some deliberation on my uncle's part, was accepted. I did not perceive, though I have since learned that Sir Malcolm did, how coldly the invitation had been made ; and the usage of society not having as yet endowed me with that tact, (a modern phrase,) which natural sensibility in some cases confers spontaneously, I felt unreserved pleasure in the idea of cultivating Frederic Brandon's acquaintance, and of passing a few days in a beautiful villa near Richmond; nor was it until after I had actually arrived there, dressed in the very excess of what my tailor assured me to be the fashion of the day, that I suspected in the slightest degree that I should be an unwelcome guest.

Frederic Brandon coloured as he met me riding into the court; and when he heard me order a groom, hired for the occasion, to bring my horse the ensuing day, “Are you come to remain all night?” he said with affected coldness, but ill-concealed alarm; and then, with hesitation, “I believe we can make room for you.” I replied, colouring in my turn at perceiving his embarrassment,—that I should return immediately, that Sir Malcolm expected me at dinner; and in this state of mutual awkwardness we walked together into the drawing-room, where an elderly gentleman, with a manner at once pleasing and high-bred, received us—It was Lord S——, whom I had seen before at Sir

Malcolm's.—He recognised me at once, welcomed me to his house, expressed great joy at seeing a young man of whom his son had spoken to him so highly, reminded me of the evening four years ago when he had seen me first, and requested me to spend a few days at their house, provided his old friend Sir Malcolm would not be offended. The difference between the father and the son, in point of manner, struck me forcibly: the affable condescending air with which Lord S. accosted me, as if he were intreating of me a favour in an earnest and persuasive tone—and the look of shame, confusion, and coldness young Brandon betrayed, as if he dreaded lest his ac-

quaintance should degrade him—could not escape me. How different was his manner towards a few select associates, to whose whims, caprices, and foibles, he appeared a perfect slave!

Of these happy and chosen few a certain number were at this time at Brandon Lodge. They had been invited most of them to the Duke of F——'s; but, having been put off for some days on the plea of want of room, and not knowing what to do with themselves in the interim, they had some of them arrived and some of them remained, all most inopportunately, at Brandon Lodge, during the very week which Lord S—— had devoted to the remuneration of the services of his City friends and Irish

cousins, by giving them a couple of days shooting and a dinner or two at his seat in the country. In consequence of this arrangement, Frederic Brandon had ventured to include me in the list; and he now found, with dismay, that this imprudence had exposed him to that which of all things he dreaded the most, the contempt and ridicule of those, whose manners, dress, appearance, and conversation would have excited the contempt and ridicule of any reasonable man.

But as if every mischance were to fall upon him at once, Lady Orville, from whom a visit was scarcely hoped for, though looked forward to as a matter of bare possibility—Lady Orville,

who might be esteemed the queen of society, the person without whose presence no place could be tolerated, and in whose society every place was said to be charming—she likewise, on her way to the Duke of F——’s, had sent word that she might possibly sleep at Brandon Lodge instead of the inn, if it were perfectly convenient, as, it may be imagined, it was readily found to be.

I should now therefore see the person, of whom I had heard and thought so much. Lady Orville’s name was the most frequent in the public papers; her house was the most splendid; her extravagance was said to have exceeded that of any other lady, whether in dress, magnificence, or donations to the dis-

tressed. I remembered the emotion I had felt at having twice only seen her, and that at a distance.

But I was aroused from these thoughts by the buz of several remarks upon myself, which were far from agreeable—“Who can he be?” “What, is it the old miser’s son?” “Are you going to make him your chaplain?” and divers other jests; which I awkwardly, and with much embarrassment, strove to look as if I did not overhear. “He is the son of a respectable Scotch gentleman, of a very old family;—my father is acquainted with old Malcolm. He came forward, if you remember, at the time of the loan, and was made a Baronet for lending vast sums of money to

Government. This is his nephew—he is supposed to have great abilities—besides, you know, at Edinburgh one cannot avoid being acquainted with every body.” “But what is his name?” said a gentleman, somewhat older than his raw and silly associates;—a gentleman whose countenance indicated mind, and whose manners, if not highly polished, were, at all events, neither effeminately ludicrous, nor disgustingly rude.

Sir Everard Macartney, for such was his name, repeated the question; and when Mr. Brandon answered, “Why, his name is Graham Hamilton.” “Is it possible?” said Sir Everard: “What! the son of Captain Hamilton, who was

so kind to Charles Denmont at sea, during his long illness and at his death?" "Not the son, but the nephew." "Well, whatever he is, if he be related at all to Captain Hamilton, I most earnestly solicit the honour of his acquaintance." As he spoke, the warmth of a heart that really could feel, shewed itself in every feature; and advancing towards me with somewhat more of ardour than politeness, I heard from his lips the most kind and heart-felt praises of my uncle.

The notice of Sir Everard, who was a man of science, and not a man of fashion, had this effect—Miss Brandon put her glass up to her eye, and stared at me with a careless gaze; and then,

approaching Sir Everard, listened with avidity to the few words which, from time to time, dropped from his mouth : for, as that which is rare is esteemed precious, so the words of the philosopher, being few, were revered; and he, in his turn, more gratified by the homage of persons so much inferior to him, than by the general applause of those who were capable of estimating his abilities, scarcely appeared at least to be sensible of the ignorance and arrogance of the company by which he was surrounded. To my farther relief, Moncrief, I found, was in the house, and shortly after made his appearance. He greeted me in a frank, cordial manner; spoke of Scotland and friends there without reserve,

and restored me to a degree of self-importance sufficient to sustain me under the embarrassment with which Frederic Brandon's reception had overwhelmed me. Whilst conversing with him, I overheard Miss Brandon say in a distinct whisper to her brother, in a manner agreeable certainly to my vanity, but repugnant to all my notions of propriety, that I was exceedingly handsome; that she had never seen a man with such a fine-shaped head; that she must instantly be introduced to me: which as soon as her brother had done, she coldly turned from me, and began to talk in a shrill voice, with much affectation, to one of the gentlemen who had first appeared.

My distress was great at her sudden approach, and greater at her equally sudden retreat. I began now to observe the smiles which my peculiar dress excited; for I had arrived in my very best attire, boots, hat, handkerchief, and coat, quite new—quite stiff—all cut and made in the very extreme of the present fashion; and though I may now say without vanity, far better looking than the light-haired, insignificant Frederic Brandon, or any of his associates—they could hardly look upon me and suppress their laughter. The consciousness that I was strangely dressed, as it every moment increased upon me, took away from me all power of acting and speaking like another man; so singularly had the ac-

cursed tailor, in whose hands my uncle had placed me, attired me. Moncrief, observing my embarrassment kindly proposed to me to walk with him to see the grounds, and I accepted the offer with a gratitude those alone can understand who have been themselves in a similar situation. Indeed no one who has not been bred up in retreat, can comprehend what it is to be exposed to the insolent stare and the pretended condescension of people, *soi-disant* of fashion.

After a dull walk in a drizzling rain, we came in, and I, retiring to my apartment, reformed my dress. During dinner, which appeared to me as endless as the time when we had been waiting for it, there was much conversation,

much laughter, many repartees : — an old Lord and a young gentleman talked incessantly, telling many anecdotes, which, if not as tedious, were certainly as long, and, I believe, not as correctly true, as my uncle the Captain's. It was singular to see the devotion these silly personages paid to Sir Everard, who, never relaxing from the rigidity of truth, checked their flippant impertinence by a simple 'Yes,' or 'No;' or, 'It has been said, but I have no reason to believe it;' or, 'Upon what authority do you advance this fact?' whilst champagne and claret were drank around in copious goblets, as if they had been water : and the length of the repast, and the shyness under which

I laboured, inclined me to regret, more than once, Sir Malcolm's one joint and dark apartment. Yet I felt the necessity of self-composure, and of assuming some of Gertrude's calmness and good-humour. I spoke little, and respectfully ; opposed none of the exaggerations I heard ; and, when obliged to make any remark, strove to confine myself to that which would give the least offence. Still I perceived a good deal of laughter ; and not having then read ' Lord Chesterfield's Letters,' I had the bad taste to imagine that I was its object.

At length the ladies withdrew, and then the trial to which I was exposed became harder for me to bear. Indecency,

immorality, gross misrepresentations, and humour of a coarse and vulgar kind, concluded this latter stage of the entertainment. My lips trembled ; my colour went and came. Frederic Brandon viewed me with indescribable agitation : he dreaded my known violence of temper if once roused. He dreaded lest I should expose myself utterly, by saying one word that would shew me, as he termed it, not a gentleman—not one who knew the world—not used to things of this sort—not, in fine, one of them. I perceived his alarm ; and looking upon him with contempt, remained dumb, and impatiently awaited the signal from Lord S—— to rise from table.

His Lordship's conduct had particu-

larly disgusted me.—He, whose manner I had thought so dignified in the morning, whose venerable head and fine countenance had commanded my respect, now laughed and drank and jested with the young men, in a manner that appeared to me the most unbecoming. I repressed my feelings, but the scene was hateful to me, and the beings contemptible who could find pleasure in it. Moncrief perceived my inward agitation, and, as we were leaving the room, gently approached me, and in a low voice, asked me to moderate my zeal and indignation. His timely admonition soothed my perturbed temper ; and when he reminded me where I was, how much the youngest of the party present, and how improper a word

or look from me would be deemed, I acquiesced at once in the propriety of his advice, and resumed the quiet and silent demeanour, which undoubtedly belonged both to my age and situation.

CHAP. IX.

THE evening was passed by me more agreeably than the preceding part of the day; for Miss Brandon, after a short conversation during tea with Moncrief, looked at me, as if to express that it was for me she was going to play, and sitting down to the piano-forte, rattled over the keys a variety of airs — all delightful, though not equally so; after which she paused for a few moments, and then, with a true spirit of coquetry, played, in softer tones, a Scottish ballad. The sounds went, as they were intended, to my heart.

I could have wept, as the children of Sion, at hearing one of my own country songs in a strange land. The impression had not ceased, when the young lady abruptly quitted the instrument, and approaching me, said, “ I know you are a poet—we heard of you from my brother—he told us, ‘ when you were a boy, you were considered quite a prodigy.’ I should so much like to have some of your poetry in my album.—Will you write something *for* me or *to* me? for most of the verses in this book, thick as it is, are addressed to me; and there is not one MS. that any other person on earth can have, except indeed it be Lady Orville.”

As she said this she looked significantly at Moncrief, then returning to her questions, “Do you know Lady Orville?—that is, have you seen her?” she said;—“for few, I believe, out of her own set know her. She is amazingly handsome—she has preserved a freshness many mistake for youth—she has such charming spirits—how happy she must be!—how incredibly happy!”—A deep sigh from Moncrief interrupted the young lady’s remarks; but she immediately resumed: “She is a little fine; she visits few, and she never invites unless she visits.”—“If she could think to please any one,” said Moncrief gravely, “would she not visit or invite;

for who in the wide world is so good-natured as Lady Orville?"

"Tell me," said Miss Brandon, impatiently, "what new books are there?" "I have read so few of the old ones yet," I replied—"Oh! now you put me in mind of what my brother said of you."—"And what did Mr. Brandon say?"—"Why, he said—but it may offend you."—"It cannot."—"That you were like a book, and spoke in sentences; and were methodical, scientific, and quite different from all of us. But I hope I do not give you pain by saying this.—I like to say and to do every thing that is odd"—"May I ask you wherefore?"—"Oh, because it makes people stare: and then it is pleasant to be different

from others;—and, in short, I am odd. Do you not think me so?”—“ I am no judge,” I replied, coldly: “ I have seen very few ladies; and every thing, of course, must appear odd to me.”—“ Oh! but I assure you I am different from others.—You may ask every body if I am not. I should think you yourself were rather singular; unlike the rest of the world.”—I bowed, without returning any answer. “ The women in Scotland are not, in general, handsome.” — “ To me they appeared so.” — “ You could not have formed any attachment, I should think:—you must have been so very young when you were there.”—“ Is there any settled age at which persons begin to love? or, if I may believe what I have

heard, is there any at which they cease?"

"Now you puzzle me, Mr. Hamilton; but, pray inform me, does your hair curl naturally? I like black hair so much: your's is darker, I think, than Mr. Moncrief's."

—I made no answer. Miss Brandon then asked me if I liked dancing. I replied in the negative. She had the kindness to communicate to me, that she had learned to dance quadrilles at Paris, and French and drawing she had studied with Mademoiselle Bertalle, the elderly lady, in a turban, who had only made her appearance when the coffee was brought round, and now sat at no great distance from the whist-table, considerably rouged, and constantly employed in taking snuff.

Mademoiselle, upon hearing herself the subject of her pupil's audible observations, slightly inclined her head with some dignity and grace, which in a measure made up for a considerable portion of affectation; and then drawing her chair towards us, she entered fully, in tolerable English, on the subject of education, addressing me in particular, which made me at first imagine, that this gouvernante took me for a governor. She expatiated much upon the best mode of making young ladies and gentlemen appear as early as possible *en société*: she talked of the finishing touches of politeness, dat svelte light air in di dance—and much more, quite enigmatical to me;—at every third sentence mentioning

Lady Orville's name ; who, she said, had one year been a pupil of her's, then appealing to me if I had not heard her highly commended. I took the hint from herself, and bowed, and smiled, in lieu of either assent or the contrary.

Moncrief, who had taken this moment of general conversation to look at a new work upon Political Economy, now opened his lips, addressing himself, as it appeared, to two dogs, who slept upon chairs near the fire-side ; and praised or condemned the work he was reading, as it excited his approbation or the reverse. Miss Brandon, who seemed to think that the comprehending an argument was of no consequence, but that the contradicting it might shew an original and daring

mind, immediately began to talk at random upon the subject; but as all she said was too absurd to bear repetition, and as many silly young ladies, who talk on such subjects, say pretty much the same, I felt happy when Lord S——, awaking from his long sleep, rang the bell and ordered supper.

The parties at cards now broke up. Lady Louisa Somerton, cousin to Miss Brandon, joined us by the fire, and, with a vehemence far more unbecoming than the ignorance displayed by her cousin, espoused the contrary side to Moncrief in the literary discussion. Moncrief, as if accustomed to take the good and evil of this life as they occurred, without disturbing himself in the least,

argued on as calmly and as seriously as if the ablest men of an university had been waiting to write down what he said ; and after the termination of this animated conversation, Miss Brandon played waltzes and reels. When the supper was served, Lady Louisa, Miss Brandon, and Mademoiselle Bertalle, retired ; after which Moncrief followed me to my apartment, and asked me how I found myself in so new a scene.

I expressed my surprise at his patience, and my dislike of the personages with whom I had made acquaintance. He answered, that I must be very new to life to care much about them ; and that instead of enjoying what was before me, I tormented myself with seek-

ing to make things as they ought to be. “Now take this word of admonition from me,” he continued, “be sensible of what you have, and affect not what you have not : I take every one as he is, and every event as it comes. The time spent in condemning and censuring others, were it made use of by us in enjoying what we possess, would be valuable beyond calculation ; for, after all, this is not your promised paradise ; Brandon Lodge is not your land of Canaan ; be but satisfied with it as you would be with an inn, and look upon what is before you without dreaming of what you conceive ought to be there.—You will to-morrow see some ladies more to my taste than Miss Brandon, her cou-

sin, and her governess ; a friend of mine is coming to whom I am desirous of introducing you ; but you must get off your pedestal if you please, and walk about as we all do ; we require not your stilts, and without them you will still look a heaven too high for us.” “ Is Miss Brandon,” I said, “ a perfectly modest girl ? ” “ What a question ! --- Why, my dear Graham, you positively embarrass even me ; assuredly I hope so ; she had the disadvantage of losing her mother early in life ; she is not excessively polished, and knows but little ; she has, however, many good qualities, and you will like her more when you know her better.”

“ But after all, is it,” he continued arch-

ly, "the company you dislike? No, Graham, believe me, it is your self-love which feels itself humbled, and this makes you discontented. Hitherto wherever you have appeared, you have been taught to consider yourself as superior to your companions. Genius and natural endowments have found a just distinction where real superiority was fairly appreciated; but here—high rank, an easy unembarrassed manner, an air of fashion, alone are considered; and you feel lost and humbled because you are aware that you do not possess these advantages in any great degree. Alas! Graham, you will soon learn these things, and then I fancy your high principles and exceeding delicacy will vanish:"—thus saying, he

wished me good-night, and left me to my own reflections. "Oh for Gertrude," I thought; "with her, far away from scenes like these, I shall taste of rational happiness. Folly, affectation, vice, constraint, presumption, how I detest you! I hate London, and London ladies and gentlemen; and, more than all, Brandon Lodge!" So I thought during half the night, when I could not sleep; and for three long hours, when, having risen early, I waited in the breakfast-room alone. So also I thought, when I rode out upon a horse of Mr. Brandon's, which could not go a step without danger of falling, and saw a cold green flat country, with a mist, which I took for water, bound-

ing the distant horizon ; so also I thought, when a magnificent carriage, and two curricles, with servants both behind and before, entered the court, and Lady Orville, Miss Clairville, the two Mr. Orvilles her brothers-in-law, and her son, and Lady Denmont her mother, were announced. It seemed as if the whole of the Orville family, in all its branches, had arrived at once ; and hastening to my own apartment, the dinner-hour, I thought, would be time enough for this interview.

The bustle of servants, trunks, portmanteaus, and maids, soon after informed me that the hour was near. Mon-crief, knowing my shyness, and feeling for my situation, had the kindness to

come to my room and accompany me into the saloon.—As I entered the apartment I looked solely for Miss Brandon, in the dread of beholding the numerous other personages, who, I thought, must be near at hand: I was, however, mistaken; they had not yet finished their toilettes; and at the very instant when a servant came to announce to Lord S—that dinner was on the table, Lady Orville and Miss Clairville entered the apartment.

Lord S—, whom I had before thought full of civility to every guest, was now a new being—all attention, all devotion. That air of superiority, that consciousness of importance which the spoiled favourites of fortune are naturally led

to assume, and which does not always misbecome them, was visible, but not displeasing, in Lady Orville; and I must say, that in beauty of person, in grace of manner, in figure, in dress, in deportment, she far surpassed every idea I had formed. Whether art or nature had given her complexion the lustre I there beheld, I know not. Her eyes were of the deepest blue, so that they appeared black at a little distance; but their brilliancy was mitigated by a peculiar expression of languor. They were long, but not laughing eyes; and the lids were fringed with, and the eyes half concealed by, their long dark lashes. Had it not been for this, some might have thought them too large. She was some-

thing above the common height too, but finely and nobly made. Her hair was dark brown ; and worn without ornament. She had a foreign manner, and spoke Italian and French better than her native language, in the pronunciation of which there was a slight peculiarity of accent. Her age,—when I first saw her, I conceived to have been barely eighteen ; but, upon observing her more narrowly, she had the traces of being older, and the fine colour in her cheeks was gone the ensuing morning. I thought, however, that she only looked a thousand times more interesting and lovely for being pale. Her voice, like her look, was full of languor—its tone thrilled to the heart :

she had a little degree of affectation : she was seldom animated, yet her lips expressed, before she spoke, the sentiment that for the time engrossed her fancy. At dinner, her conversation was solely confined to those near her ; and in the evening she spoke so low, that I scarcely could catch a word she said.

Enchanted with her beauty, I had remained with my eyes fixed on her for a considerable time, when I perceived that Mr. Melmond and Mr. Lennox, two favourite followers of Miss Brandon, were laughing with her, and that I was the subject of their mirth. It had hitherto never occurred to me, how entirely, from the moment of this new accession of company, I had been

neglected. I was not like the little gentleman in a recent farce,⁺ so very tenacious of respect, that I keenly felt its omission; but I now discovered that I was considered as a being whose very presence seemed disgraceful to my associates; and when I saw myself treated with absolute disdain, some of my native spirit rushed into me, and I felt an indignation the more misplaced, as I alone in this transaction had been to blame. I had placed myself out of my own sphere. I had condescended to enter a circle of which I must of necessity be the most unimportant part. The haughty and repulsive manner assumed towards me by Mr. Brandon and his sister, was strongly contrasted with the

servile flattery which they paid to their new guests, who were evidently of a higher genus than themselves ; and, like the monandria, of a class of which there was no other example. This neglect left me fully at leisure to contemplate Lady Orville, who but for a gentle laugh now and then, and at times a softly-breathed sigh, might have raised the same doubt as the figure of Constance de Beverley before her judges, of her existence :—

——“ So calm and pale,

That, but her breathing did not fail,

And motion slight of eye and head,

And of her bosom, warranted

That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,

You might have thought a form of wax

Wrought to the very life was there.”——

Thus Lady Orville reclined upon a sofa. One of her brothers-in-law sat near to her, as it seemed to me, in profound silence. The other, George Orville, dressed in a style which was not quite so ridiculous in him as it would have been in another, kept the company in a continual smile by trifling attacks and endless gossip. However absurd and affected much of this might be, it was impossible, at the same time, not to perceive, that these were persons of real refinement and high manners.

A sensible proof that I was right in this opinion was shortly given me when Mr. Orville, evidently disgusted at young Brandon's rudeness, accosted me in a cold polite manner. I could have smiled

when I heard the inquiry, which he pompously began, relative to the agricultural improvements in Scotland, and the deeply-learned questions which he asked of me with an air of reverence and attention, as if his life had depended upon my answer. He stood up whilst he entered upon the subject, and though naturally proud, abrupt, and in general almost wanting in courtesy, he assumed a degree of ceremony which exceedingly embarrassed me; adding continually “Your opinion is all in all; I wish not to hear any other; you have obliged me unutterably by your answer, I am satisfied—perfectly so.” And as he repeated between his teeth the words “perfectly so,” he took snuff from a box

the beauty of which was really admirable.

My eye was caught by the miniature on the box: it resembled Lady Orville.—He, who seemed lost in affectation, was as quick as lightning in discovering my admiration of his trinkets; and shewing me the box, said carelessly, “My sister,—reckoned good—not like.” “Oh very like, — very beautiful!” I replied, with more enthusiasm than he had, perhaps, ever witnessed; for staring at me with something like approbation, he continued, “A young friend of mine painted it, quite an *ebauche*,—a rising genius—price a hundred guineas;—well enough for a beginner.” And then returning to his former post, whispered

in Lady Orville's ear a word or two, immediately after beckoned to me, returned, and presented me to her. The excessive coldness which I had lately experienced from others, perhaps made me feel more deeply the sweet smile with which Lady Orville received me; and when she asked me a few questions about my uncle Capt. Hamilton,—turning to Moncrief, as if to reassure herself that she had made no mistake in the name,—the emotion I felt was great; it was as if I could have knelt and worshipped her. Her beauty I did not think of. I saw alone the angel mind and heart, which, forgetful of self, considered only what it could do for others. My admiration I fear was ill-bred, for Moncrief

called me away twice before I could bring myself to move; and Lady Orville seemed, I thought, rather embarrassed by my ardent gaze: yet, strange as it may seem, she looked at me with a degree of interest, of surprise, of confusion, which seemed to say, “you need not fear me.” I knew no longer what I said or did. I had not power to withdraw. But why do I detail my folly? No man who has not, like myself, known the feelings which belong to keen sensibility and utter inexperience;—no man, who has not, like myself, been raised at once from an humble sphere into the splendid habitations of the rich and the great, can conceive the sensations I experienced at being received with kindness

by one, to whom all others were paying the most servile homage. Fixed as if by enchantment, no human labour would have appeared to me more difficult, than did the act of retiring from the very conspicuous post in which I stood. Blushing modesty and shyness in a youthful maiden has its charms, but in a man, it must ever be ridiculous; and my valour, like that of Squire Acres, was going fast, when Lady Denmont, the mother of Lady Orville, who had been talking to Lord S——, suddenly turning to me, in a louder tone than I had yet heard from any of the party, exclaimed, “Is it possible I see before me any relation of Captain Hamilton? Lord S——, you must introduce Mr.

Hamilton to me ;—or there is no need, for I must ever feel acquainted with his family, from whom my own have experienced so much kindness.” The words were like an electric shock, and the whole circle looked upon me as with a new spirit. Lady Orville, still remaining by Moncrief, talked low, and all the time, I think, of me. Lady Denmont asked me many questions, but I scarcely heard her ; for I was watching, thinking of, and admiring Lady Orville while she spoke.

Miss Brandon now proposed several amusements, such as *secretaire*, charades, and *jeux-d’esprits* of all sorts, in which, with music and dancing, the hours of the night passed by, for me, as but a mo-

ment; Lady Orville had spoken to me, and every one was now kind in the extreme. Here was exhibited by the company much of that talent, which can only be acquired by constantly living in the best society: the light artillery of words, wit, sighs, smiles; the extempore verse, intermixing touches of satiric spleen with real good-humour and skilful flattery; the happy art of saying every thing, and doing every thing, with presence of mind, delicacy, tact; the lively contest, which at the same time leaves behind it neither pain nor asperity—so high is the polish of the weapons, so complete the skill of the combatants. All tediousness was avoided by the rapid change of topics, which, like the scenery of a pantomime, must be shifted

every instant; and I could not but admire the dexterity displayed by those who appeared to have read every thing, and to know every thing—an effect produced, as I am told, by skinning books, and cursory reading of reviews. This,—all this, like the manners of the world, or the costume in fashion, may be acquired in time by the apt and diligent. But how to learn the depth of the art? How learn to speak of virtue, when we have forsaken it; to express abhorrence at the vices we practise; to jest with frivolity upon subjects we still venerate and fear; to smile, when our hearts are lacerated; to affect youth in the decrepitude of age; to talk of love when we have ceased to feel it; to appear

tranquil when the still, small voice of conscience calls to us from within; and ah! to look so innocent, when our hearts, and the whole world, know that we are guilty? “*Pour qui le secret donc,*” as Basil says in the “*Barbier de Seville*;”—but no matter. Since this, I too have studied the science, though till now without effect. Those who feel deeply cannot acquire it. Yet Lady Orville, had she not attained it? And did she not—ah! did *she* not feel?

“With all your experience, Mr. Hamilton,” interrupted Mr. M., “you are wrong in this vehemence of indignation: I cannot agree with you, nor with the many, in thinking persons of rank as criminal as they are accused of being.

There is a prettiness in this order of society, which none can more admire than I do ; and, with some exceptions, I am convinced by years of observation, that greater vice and corruption has been ascribed than really belongs to it. Desperate crime disdains to herd in the light train of folly ; and meanness, baseness, and corruption, if they enter, are obliged to present themselves under the concealment of a mask, or at least a veil. The greatest reproach that can be cast upon the votaries of fashion, is the slavish fear they ever seem to be under of each other ; the dread, not of doing wrong, but of exciting ridicule ; the anxiety to be distinguished and yet not to be consi-

dered dissimilar from their associates; the idolatry of self; the total forgetfulness of the real end of life, and the constant frittering away of time in little portions upon little pursuits. Amongst the uncultivated and rude, the character is more decided, and vice stalks abroad in its one undisguised and ferocious form."

My own birth and early habits, replied Mr. Hamilton, placed me between the two extremes of society. It is, therefore, but natural that I should view with greater partiality the middle rank. It seems to me that in it is the sap and stamina of the country. The flower is more beautiful; but, as Dryden says, "The life is in the leaf." From that order vice and dissipation are in a great

measure excluded. The regular habits of necessary industry discourage and repress them, and though some will tread in the steps of the higher classes, these are but as the froth which shews itself upon the wave: the stream below runs fresh, strong, and uncontaminated, and long, long may it continue to do so!

“It cannot long continue to do so,” said Mr. M. interrupting Mr. Hamilton, “if care is not immediately taken to check a fast-spreading corruption.—I could say much, but I will not interrupt your narrative—I attend to you, Sir,—with your distresses I cannot sympathize, but I hear you with pleasure.”

CHAP. X.

Mr. Hamilton, resumed. — The ensuing morning I had intended to leave Brandon Lodge; but, to my surprise, I was warmly pressed to stay by Frederic and Eugenia Brandon. Miss Brandon herself, playfully approaching me, said, “Oh, Mr. Hamilton, you cannot possibly go: you would not wish it, were you to have heard half how much Lady Orville has commended you.” I coloured; I felt that I did so; I was flattered. I required no pressing;

I staid. But I saw little of Lady Orville till the dinner was over, when she again seated herself upon a sofa, surrounded by an obsequious circle.

Lady Denmont, whose kind remembrance of my uncle had so much contributed to extricate me from the embarrassment of my situation, now introduced me to Miss Clairville, her youngest daughter, whom I had not spoken with the evening before, and whom I wish it were in my power to describe either in person or in mind; but where the charms of any individual belong more to a certain expression of sweetness and grace than to regular beauty, they are almost undefinable. Near Lady Orville, Miss Clairville appeared like a white

rose, or what is called the maiden's blush, by the side of some rare exotic, whose splendour and fragrance attracts general admiration; and though attractively beautiful in her figure, her finely-cut features, and very delicate complexion, yet it was not until a near view, and more complete acquaintance, that the whole of her peculiar fascination could be felt. Until I had spoken with Miss Clairville—until I had heard her sing in Italian one of Mozart's simple yet affecting airs, I had remained faithful, even in thought, to Gertrude. Lady Orville's beauty had no power to detach me; and of all the numbers I had beheld, Gertrude's smile was yet the sweetest in my remembrance. But even

Gertrude's smile was hardly to be compared to that of Miss Clairville.

Lady Orville, when she saw me in conversation with her sister, turned her full eyes upon me, and languidly beckoning to the young lady and to me, seemed to request us both to join her. "Mr. Hamilton appears so fond of music," she said, "that I think if you were to sing to him my favourite air, he would be pleased." Miss Clairville immediately complied with her sister's request; and then sang, "The Flowers of the Forest," the air of which does little justice to the beautiful words. As she raised her eyes plaintively upwards, the heaving of her bosom, her beautiful hands, free from all motion, pressing the keys, yet scarcely appearing

to touch them; the perfect stillness of her expression, and the manner in which, when she had concluded the song, all her features once more resumed their former repose, filled me with delight and admiration. "She must love passionately, and suffer anguish unutterable." These words escaped me, as I left the instrument. "Who?" said Moncrief, smiling—as he overheard me—"Miss Clairville, perhaps. She neither has loved, does suffer, nor ever will do either. I believe she is blessed with a calm contented spirit. She has many suitors, being rich; she has many admirers, being beautiful. Lady Denmont leaves her much to the guidance of her own judgment: I should have heard it, had

any thing of this nature taken place. And you may believe me, she never feels less than when singing in this impassioned manner." "Impossible!" I said—"Yet be assured 'tis true," replied Moncrief.

Miss Brandon now proposed dancing. Lady Orville would play—she could play waltzes, quadrilles, any thing they wished; but she was not inclined to dance. Her sister would; and in a moment that form of heaven, that divinity whom I had thought it sacrilege to approach, was embraced by every man in the room with little ceremony or regard. I am no great pretender to morality. The language I speak is rough and rude, as was my origin; and no one can regard with

more disgust than I do, the critic who dwells upon every innocent freedom, prates of propriety he never knew, and considers all harmless amusements incentives to wrong, and deviations from virtue. In its own country, where long habit and custom render it common, the waltz is as any other dance, and I could see the woman I loved mix in it without regret; but here—must virgin youth be emboldened at least by joining in that dance, which can never be reconciled to the right feelings of a lover, a husband, or a parent.

Miss Clairville's reserve, her look of rank, her easy, graceful motion, her entire freedom from affectation, rendered it less painful: Gertrude, had she

been there, might have waltzed: her simplicity and modesty would have prevented any wrong construction. But when I saw Miss Brandon begin, disgust once again arose, and the first objections to the dance returned in their full force when no longer supported by dignity, tempered by grace, or chastened by innocence: it shewed too plainly how much it was calculated to render more conspicuous and more offensive, affectation, pertness, vanity, and the love of theatrical display. Some of the dislike which Miss Brandon excited naturally fell upon Miss Clairville, and nothing but Lady Orville's assurance that her sister disliked all kind of exhibition, and only danced to please her mother, recon-

ciled me to her having done so. But the airs that were played affected me beyond words, and the whole scene was enchanting.

“Sir,” said Mr. M——, “You talk of these matters with an enthusiasm—a romance, to me perfectly unintelligible. We have not the same nature, surely—not a thought in common: proceed, however, proceed; and let us hear what you did amongst all these divinities.”

Mr. Hamilton made some excuse for the vehemence of his language—I will try and speak more calmly, he said, but my mind is still inflamed—and you must bear with me. Before my thoughts could become calm, the waltzes concluded, and a dance more light and airy took

place. Amidst the unskilful and ungraceful, like something divine skimming the earth with softest ease, Miss Clairville might be distinguished. It was not in my power to command my admiration; with all the ardour which I felt, I commended; and hanging enraptured over Lady Orville's chair, as she continued to play, I poured into her ear such praises of her sister, that turning round with an archness and yet tenderness I did not expect, "What must he be," she said, "who feels thus strongly the merits of another—not assuredly a man of the world!"—"Can there be men," I said in a serious and impressive tone, "who ——" "Oh now," said Moncrief, interrupting me, "you are

beginning like Joseph Surface, with one of your sentiments. Assuredly there are men, and they are not apt, in this country, to feel with all the rawness and exaggeration of a college."

As Moncrief said this in a haughty and piqued tone, I looked up, when, to my surprise, I beheld a gloomy frown louring over his features, and a smile expressive of bitter contempt upon his lips. Alarmed—I paused. "What can I have said, or done," I thought, "to call for this?" but it is no matter." Lady Orville, turning to me with an expression no man could coldly witness, changed the conversation with the dexterity to which I before alluded, by asking me many questions respecting

Edinburgh. “I have been nearly all over the world,” she said, “but I have never seen Edinburgh; yet I know it, I think—at least I have heard of it sufficiently.” She smiled, and looked upon Moncrief with all the witchery of a woman who feels her power and misuses it. He was sullen, and made no reply. That he loved either her or Miss Clairville I was now convinced; but that he could feel jealousy of one who until this hour had been so utterly neglected!—this I could not understand.

Lady Denmont drew her chair behind her daughter’s, and asked me who was the writer of an article in one of the last Reviews, and some other gene-

ral questions upon the literature of Scotland. The conversation turned on works of this nature. Lady Orville professed her admiration of that species of writing. Moncrief was equally sensible of the talent displayed ; but doubted whether, upon the public mind, it had a beneficial effect. “ Writers now,” he said, “ only write with a view to court or escape criticism. Where the thought is warm and vivid, it should come forth with freedom. Had Shakspeare thought of Mr. J——y would he have written as he has done ? The critic’s duty is to feel beauty or detect errors no doubt ; but the writer, who remembers even the critic, will ever be cold and flat. Again, the reading of reviews is

to the public, what eating of many different dishes is to a child. The organs of digestion are weakened in the one, and the mind of the other over-informed, and that unnaturally. Sciences are skimmed over, conclusions are discovered, without any effort; and learning runs through a brainless head, as water through a pipe or channel, leaving it as empty as it found it. It puts a tongue into the mouths of fools, and gives weapons to hands that know not how to wield them. Above all, it tends to extinguish natural taste; and babies now, instead of feeling with enthusiasm the beauties of a play or a poem, pretend to judge by rule and discover the defects.—Lady Orville differed from

Moncrief, and he replied to her arguments as I thought, with something of acrimony and ill humour. Miss Brandon, tired of this discussion, proposed to teach us a new French game at cards; but as the mind and body had been sufficiently exercised during the whole evening, it was thought advisable to sit still, look pretty, and do nothing. At this moment what had passed fixed my attention upon Moncrief: he had a serious, not a melancholy cast of countenance; and when he became animated, a ray of superior intellect beamed from his eyes. He had a most comprehensive mind, and was blest or curst with a high genius, which raised him above others. He united the strong sense of manly

reason to enthusiastic and exquisite sensibility. His character was independent and high. Yet, but for this spirit and high courage, he had been worked upon by the designing and wicked; for, with all his abilities, his heart was melting as kindness itself to the unfortunate; and the tear of sympathy glistened in his eyes, when anything awakened it in his heart. He read with emphasis, with pathos, but with no affectation. I never heard any one read like him. I never saw any one yet like him. When seated near Lady Orville, it seemed as if Nature had united the two master-pieces of her art; and that destiny alone had separated them from each other. Yet, in Moncrief's noble soul the hopes of

the seducer could not find place:—strong were his passions—powerful were the incentives of example. Early thrown upon the rough school of the world, amidst the young, the gay, the dissipated, he had, like others, forsaken the calmer road, and plunged into all the violences of youthful passion; but he had climbed again the rugged steep with the daring intrepidity of advancing reason, and his mind, adorned with knowledge, rose above the vulgar herd.—His eyes were now turned upon Lady Orville with all the softness of love; but, as if resolved to conquer the feeling, he spurned it from him, and struggled with the tempter. Yes, he nobly set me the example of self-conquest,—but

how have I followed it ! Moncrief had shewn me much kindness;—even upon this evening he did not forget me. He was perfectly disinterested—in his conduct throughout; but he was hurt—he did not disguise it : he saw in a moment, at least he fancied that he saw, how much I was struck with Lady Orville, and that she was not displeased with the ardour and suddenness of the impression.

CHAP. XI.

To betray, even in after-years, any woman who ever had confided in me, were base. But as appearances were more unfavourable to me than the reality justified, it becomes a duty to relate every thing that passed between myself and Lady Orville. On the second evening of my stay at St. John's Lodge, Miss Brandon had appeared to be so much struck by a sudden sense of my attractions, that Frederic Brandon had thought it necessary

to inform me that his sister, being herself an heiress, and consequently not in want of money, was destined to marry none but a man of rank. I could not help smiling when he said this, for I perfectly understood his meaning, and had not been blind to her attentions. Miss Brandon was a clever, forward girl, with a bad manner; insolent to those she termed her inferiors, and servile with persons like Lady Orville, whom she considered as the great leader of society. Her real wish was to be in the very extremity of the fashion, but she could not achieve it—she could only dance attendance upon those who were; and she required a great name, as a sort of prop, or support, whenever she gave an opi-

nion. Even whilst professing to like singularity, and to be herself odd, she was always anxious to ascertain how far such extravagances would suit the very elevated taste of the small circle to which Lady Orville belonged. Lord S. had a good cook, a good house, and a great deal of money; but he was not the fashion: neither was Miss Brandon. Before I left them, Lady Orville, Lady Denmont, and Moncrief, having departed that morning, she read me some lines which she had newly inserted in her album. They were entitled, ‘A Farewell to a young stranger;’ and as she read them, I was surprised not only at their beauty, but at the tone of feeling with which they were written. “Did you write them?”

I said earnestly. “Why do you ask?” she replied, colouring more deeply than became her. “Because I earnestly desire to know. — They are beautiful, let me read them again.” “No, I cannot—I will not.” The purport of the lines was, that the writer of them might, perhaps, never more meet that new—that unsophisticated being, who seemed to feel so deeply;—that the ardent beaming of his eye, which shewed a heart unexperienced in the ways, and unworn by the sorrows, of life, had awakened sympathy and interest in the bosom of her whose career was over; —that although they might probably never meet again, one who had thrown away health, riches, talent, earnestly

prayed that he might better use the gifts of Providence, nor ever know the bitter pains of late repentance and ineffectual remorse. “They are not of your writing,” I said. Miss Brandon said, they were; but she said it in a manner which convinced me that they were not; and however vain it may appear, I believed them written by Lady Orville, more especially as one stanza alluded to the emotion I had betrayed whilst her sister sang. I told Miss Brandon I felt sure they were by Lady Orville,—that they reminded me of Miss Clairville’s song; and I asked her whether it were possible the former lady could be unhappy? “Unhappy,” said Miss Bran-

don, laughing; “good heavens! what can you mean?—Unhappy! I should assuredly say Lady Orville was the happiest, as well as the most perfect, of all human beings.” This indeed I believed; for that smile of heaven, which conferred delight upon others, could not, I imagined, proceed from a suffering heart;—“And long, long may she continue so!” I exclaimed with fervour. “Mercy upon me!” said Miss Brandon, “you have fallen in love, I am sure of it, at first sight—the most dangerous of all fallings in love,” she continued, looking down with affectation; but I was too much moved to attend to her, and only repeated, that I would give any thing for the verses.

The next morning I took my leave; but three days at Brandon Lodge had ruined me—two days in the society of Lady Orville had made Sir Malcolm's house insupportable. I knew not what I said or did: Sir Malcolm stared at me, and asked me, if I was ill. The first day passed—the second began as unprosperously—nor was I yet sufficiently myself to speak, read, or write, when to my astonishment I received an invitation to dine at Lady Orville's.

I was in the act of writing a constrained letter to Gertrude. The difficulty of expressing myself as I wished, before the entrance of the servant, who would deliver his message to myself, had been considerable;—it was now utterly

impossible for me to end my letter. Every thing I had to say to her was so forced ; the scenes which engrossed me were so wholly unconnected with Gertrude, that they could not have been understood by her ; and I detested the thought of, perhaps, wounding her by praising others, or dazzling her fancy by descriptions of gaiety, which I never could wish her to partake. I therefore threw my letter into the fire, after re-perusing it, and perceiving how cold, how constrained it was ; and thinking of nothing but of obtaining my uncle's leave to dine at Lady Orville's, I went to him in his miserable study, and stopped as I pronounced the words, ' have you any particular objec-

tion'—for I saw it was an unfavourable moment.

My bills for clothes and various other expenditures were on the table. His eyes, always little, were now so lost in wrinkles, as to be scarcely perceptible, and with his hand he was reckoning the figures of my tailor's account, which, to my infinite distress, amounted to fifty pounds, or more properly speaking, to 49*l.* 19*s.* 11*d.* "My own bill," said Sir Malcolm, in a sharp high tone he never used but when displeased, "is yearly fifteen pounds. I allow it to another rascal to find me in clothes." "I think it dear," I said, laughingly; and my uncle, who was too fond of

me to be offended, looked at his threadbare coat, and said it was certain the knave cheated him ; but that was always the case if you went to the first-rate and most fashionable shops, as he did. Then getting still more good-humoured, as he found he had begun being so, he ended by almost telling me that I might spend what I pleased, for as I was to marry Gertrude, he should make me the heir of all he possessed, if I behaved as I ought ; that, therefore, as I was to have it soon or late, he did not wish me to be in a hurry for his departure. This gave rise to expressions of gratitude from me ; and so the ill-humour vanished.

I then informed him, for I thought

as he seemed so proud of me he would like to hear it, that Lady Orville—the Countess of Orville, had done me the honour of inviting me to dine with her; but contracting his brows again, “Graham,” he said, “that’s no great honour, between ourselves. The lady’s not respectable; have as little to do with the Orvilles as you can, they’re sair comical folks. I have had her here before this, and she’s only making much o’ye to get at my money; but I’ll gie her none, not I.” “Uncle,” I answered indignantly, “you mistake me quite. My Lady Orville,”—“*Your* Lady Orville!”—“Well, but I mean this Lady Orville is the richest, best, finest lady in London.” “That may be,” said Sir Mal-

colm, “but then I pity the other puir things from my soul; but if you ’ll hear me, you’ll learn that in truth your Lady Orville, and my Lady Orville, are much the same person, only she catches the auld men by the garb o’ sorrow, and she cozens the young men by the allurements of beauty; but still it is my belief, that your Lady Orville is Lady Denmont’s daughter.”—“The same.”

“Now mark me, Nephew Graham: in this gay, this dissipated town, this singular assemblage of rich and poor, wise and foolish, Lord Orville is one, but not the only, instance of a great nobleman, who from his youth seemed to take no delight himself in any of his own possessions or advantages.—He allowed all

about him to spend his fortune and exert his privileges, without concerning himself either about one or the other. Thus he made many friends, and few enemies—for he hurt no one, and sought no one. His abilities were good, but his love of repose, and his distaste for all sort of show or noise, prevented them from being much exercised or generally known. He was at Naples on a tour, with his two brothers, as I have heard, when Lady Denmont, having lately become a widow, was also there for her own health: they were always at her ladyship's house, amidst dinner parties, amusement, and expense of all sorts; and he the cleverest of them all, the greatest gentleman of them all, and assuredly a man in mind

and form of a very superior cast, at that time not more engrossed by life, its cares, or vicissitudes, than the inhabitants of the silent city in the Arabian Nights. —To be brief (for it is sufficient that one in a family speaks at the length *pau* brother Richard does,) Lord Orville, in his reverie, saw, loved, and married the eldest Miss Clairville, a girl at that time such as the world contained no other—the most beautiful, the most accomplished, the wildest, and yet the gentlest — the most admired, and yet most virtuous. — Yet, Graham, mark her fate. This happiest—this, I may say, dearest child of prosperity, is now involved in deep distress. Imprudence,

pushed to the utmost—a beneficence, that knew not to refuse—a tenderness of heart, that could not upon any occasion resist the supplication of the unfortunate, and a wasting spirit that scorned to take the due means of preserving any thing, have brought her to utter ruin. Lovers surrounded her, and ——”

“Speak not so profanely, uncle,” I said, interrupting him; “you say she is involved, wretched—it may be so; but no suspicion of guilt can attach itself to her name. Thousands, it is true, surround her, and regard her with eyes of admiration; yet none dare hope for favour. She is like an angel, placed on earth, entrapped and entangled in its cruel

artificial snares. She is like a rose, devoured by caterpillars; but herself all sweetness, purity, beauty. She is ——”

“Well done, Graham, I see how it is with you. However, go to her dinner, for there’s a moral in all you have said; and besides, I never heard one ill word of her reputation, which I should, no doubt, if there had been one to say. Go to her, therefore, my boy; but when you can spare a little of your raptures and enthusiasm——” “Sir,” I interrupted, “is it probable that a woman that is embarrassed, unhappy, and deserted, should give balls and suppers, which she does continually?” “She’s ruined, I tell you,” replied Sir Malcolm; “and that accounts for it:—it’s quite the fashion.

We rich and honest folks break up early, and lock up our coffers; and they who keep nothing within, like my Lady in question, are all open and profuse, covering necessity with shew and pretence, as some General did in a famine, to deceive other folk."

My uncle now shewed me some letters from Lady Orville, which very much surprised me. Struck with commiseration to find that sorrow had taken root in a bosom which seemed formed only for happiness, I made all the usual moral reflections, and uttered all the common-place invectives against dissipation and extravagance.—I then listened to my uncle with more attention than I had done before; and being full

of gratitude at his kindness in permitting me to accept the invitation, I asked him if I could not be of use to him, which he immediately found that I might be ; and in consequence set me to copy the dullest, and longest, and most intricate of his books. I made ten thousand errors in the task, and well nigh wrote the name of Orville, two or three times in every page ; but I was in extreme good humour, and my uncle was pleased to overlook my negligence.

I need not say with what impatience I awaited the moment of regaining my liberty. It would have been madness not to have answered Lady Orville's invitation. I might have written, but I

knew not the form ; in short, I preferred an excuse for a visit. I flew to her—I saw her—I was embarrassed—she was so herself — I hardly know what either of us said. This I know, that she looked more beautiful than at Lord S——’s ; that her cheeks were pale ; that she was like a faded lovely flower, and her countenance expressed sadness, gentleness, nothing hidden, nothing affected. She seemed to wish to speak to me ; complained of Moncrief’s absence at a moment when she needed a friend, and said he had been a sincere one to her. I reminded her that Lady Denmont was in town ; she evaded answering ; tears filled her eyes : I was unable to see

them without experiencing a degree of emotion and pain I knew it would be ridiculous to shew. She said that I appeared so good, so young—that it was unkind and cruel to speak to me of griefs which I could not even conceive ; “ But yet,” she said, “ you can be of use to me—perhaps, save me. You will soon hear my sorrows from others, you may as well know them from myself.” She had not proceeded farther, when her mother was announced. I withdrew ; but as I did so, I thought I perceived an expression of surprise in Lady Denmont’s countenance on beholding me. She bowed coldly to me as I passed—I returned home ; but all my thoughts were occupied by Lady Orville.

CHAP. XII.

THE day for dining with Lady Orville at length came. I arrived early; but had no opportunity of seeing her alone. She now appeared in much better spirits. She paid more attention to me than to others, and I thought she either felt or feigned more interest for me than Gertrude ever had shewn. From the day of the dinner, till the evening of her ball, which took place in the ensuing week, and to which she had invited me,

I met her but once, and that accidentally, in her carriage. She had the two children with her, a girl and a boy. They were beautiful, but they did not look very healthy; and she appeared tenderly anxious about them.

In the course of this week Mr. Brandon arrived in town, and did me the extraordinary honour of calling on me. He brought a letter in order to shew it to me: it will appear like vanity, if I transcribe it; but vanity is no longer the uppermost feeling in my heart, and to the imputation of it, as to other imputations, I am now insensible. I know not to whom it was written; he would only tell me that it was to a friend of his sister; but it

was Lady Orville's writing. Half of it was torn away. It began with an intreaty that the person to whom it was addressed, would come to town for her ball; "And then you will see Graham Hamilton; and let me assure you, you will not see him without danger. I know you are already half in love with my description of Moncrief, but Graham is a thousand times more attractive, and besides, younger; he is a poet—that you have heard no doubt; and he would be a lover if he dared—that any one may see; and were I in spirits, had I not a million of things to annoy me, I would drive down to M— on purpose to bring him with me: at all events, I

depend upon you for Tuesday. He is not so tall as Moncrief, though his figure is somewhat lighter: Moncrief's hair, as you well know, falls carelessly over his dark brow, and gives him an appearance of fierceness and negligence not altogether unbecoming; but this young Graham's hair is curled above his forehead and neck. Each has a noble and manly countenance; but Graham's eyes are softer than Moncrief's. Moncrief's complexion varies with every feeling, reddens with the breeze, and grows pale with sorrow or illness; but Graham's cheek is colourless: both are fond of conversation, both are ardent and free in speech, but Graham's manner is not

so perfectly unaffected as Moncrief's, for his embarrassment is greater, and his knowledge of social life less."

I believe I have told you before in the course of this narrative, that from a boy I had been troubled at times by certain agitations of mind, during which my spirits were exceedingly depressed, and my feelings sensitive to a degree of painful and alarming weakness. The fit was now upon me; I questioned therefore the propriety of appearing in public whilst under its influence. I know not how to define precisely what occurred at these periods; to my mind it was as if my imagination was struck — as if the events of futurity in some measure

appeared before me ; as if material objects vanished, and the perceptions of the mind became too bright and vivid for the understanding to bear. I was as if endowed for a few instants with a new sense ; memory appeared to cease and futurity to open—in fine, the seer's mournful spirit, the power of second-sight, in some measure, I verily believe tormented me, though in a degree too slight to deserve the name.

My uncle, who saw that I was not well, requested me to remain at home : but I went. Who that had been invited by Lady Orville to a ball, at my age, would not have gone ? I arrived too at ten—no one had thought of coming at

that hour. Lady Orville was however dressed—I spoke with her more than I had yet done. She talked of Scotland: I spoke of Gertrude, of my hopes, of my prospects; but my tongue feebly and coldly expressed my sentiments. Some time after, I spoke of herself, of her kindness to me, of her beauty, her talents, my admiration—and I was more eloquent. Lady Orville looked upon me with interest. She placed her sickly but pretty boy in my arms; he was half-asleep—I pressed him with enthusiasm to my bosom, and looked upon his mother. We were in a small apartment opening upon the ball-room, a boudoir prettily fitted up with lace and dra-

perty. Lady Orville was leaning carelessly upon a harp: I reminded her of her sister's singing, and the impression it had made upon me. I asked her to sing; without hesitation she touched the strings simply and unaffectedly. Her voice was deep, impassioned, and so sweetly touching, that except from the dear and ever to be lamented Mrs. Jordan, I never heard notes like those which now delighted me. The air was that of an old French romance; the words as follows:

If thou could'st know what 'tis to weep,

To weep unpitied and alone

The live-long night, whilst others sleep,

Silent and mournful watch to keep,

Thou would'st not do what I have done.

If thou could'st know what 'tis to smile,
To smile, whilst scorn'd by every one,
To hide by many an artful wile,
A heart that knows more grief than guile,
Thou would'st not do what I have done.

And, oh, if thou could'st think how drear,
When friends are changed and health is gone,
The world would to thine eyes appear,
If thou like me to none wert dear,
Thou would'st not do what I have done.

“Heavens! what can you have done?” I said, as soon as she had ceased. She had tears trembling in her eyes—she was silent: the song she had sung still sounded mournfully in my ears, and I dared not again disturb that sacred silence.

The ball commenced towards twelve, but long before that hour, Lady Orville drew me from where I was

seated with the child, and made me assist her in arranging the flowers and decorations. Moncrief was one of the first who entered. The company now began rapidly to assemble. I made an effort to forget the song and Lady Orville. I tried to think alone of the fair and crowded assembly before me. To my eyes, still new to scenes like these, every woman looked lovely, as we fancy the hours of Paradise; and every man appeared to me another Moncrief; but still there was a want of gaiety in the dance: it was beautiful—it was graceful, but it was apparently dull; for the heart's laugh was never heard, and the joyous sound of re-

velry, such as I had read of, in Scottish hall and Baronial feast, and even such as I had myself witnessed amongst the youth in my own time, was wanting. The constraint, too, of the younger party was great—it was not natural ease; and the unfledged bird attempting to follow its parent on its uncertain pinions, could not more frequently fail; yet upon the whole the scene was dazzling, and Lady Orville, breathing life and happiness around, shewed the picture of a beautiful woman, not forgetful of herself, but eager to render every one happy. It was delightful to see the benevolence of her welcoming smile, the repose of her whole appearance, the

dignity with which she did the honours of her house, without effort. Her dress was light—I know not of what texture: she wore one row of pearls round her neck, and her hair braided. Moncrief was gazing with anxiety upon her: it was evident to me, novice as I was, that he was seriously attached to her. I pitied him; for who could have beheld any woman so fair, so brilliant, and not have loved?

The first quadrille was over: Miss Clairville seated herself near the place where I was standing.

Suddenly that dreaded malady came upon me: it was as if a mist had enveloped me. I saw no more: a singing in my ears — a sickness

and violent beating of the heart oppressed me. Miss Clairville asked me if I were ill; I put my hand to my head—I had not power to speak. Then it was that even whilst my eyes were fixed upon Lady Orville, a vision wholly different seemed to fill the scene; every one appeared clad in black—Gertrude appeared dead, and in her shroud. My father and my uncle stood before me; but oh, how pale and feeble my father looked! then all was terror, uproar, noise.

I started; Miss Clairville was assisting me with some water; several persons surrounded my chair looking at me with surprise. To me it appeared as if I had been ill an hour, but I found

the whole had scarcely exceeded a minute. "What did I say or do?" I asked Miss Clairville hastily. "Nothing," she said, blushing deeply and sighing, "but look so earnestly on my sister, and appear so agitated, that every one in the room observed you." "Oh!" I thought, "how little they know, or even guess, what was passing in my mind."

This occurrence was quite sufficient to occasion a general observation, that I was deeply in love; that it was easy to see I had no command over myself, or I should not have exposed myself; and that the attention of one sister, whilst my eyes were fixed on the other, was a proof that

Lady Orville encouraged me in my folly. Frederic Brandon rallied me on this subject; that conceit and vanity which no man is strong enough entirely to subdue, prevented me from discouraging him; and such is the weakness of human nature upon this point, that I could not but feel satisfaction, that my illness was placed to an account other than the true one. The boy, who was somewhat fantastically dressed, and had been talked to and admired by all the company, now, upon being sent to rest, seeing me, darted from his mother and climbed up my knees to wish me good night. This again confirmed the opinion which had already been formed by

many; for every one in that busy town seemed more interested in the affairs of others than their own, and more intent upon scandal and surmise than upon any weightier matter. I was besides, for the moment, an object of importance. My personal attractions were augmented by the reported addition of an immense fortune. ‘Heir to Sir Malcolm’ was whispered on all sides, and his wealth exaggerated, nay, doubled and tripled by every new speaker.

Miss Clairville in the mean time being asked to dance, left me to my own reflections. Was Gertrude ill? No, it was impossible. I had heard from home lately. I would not be

superstitious. Enough of dreams, I thought; let me attend to the scene before me. I now observed Moncrief conversing with Lady Orville, and from his manner I suspected that he was speaking of me. Since his return to town he had never interchanged one word with me. I felt hurt; but such reflections were interrupted by the approach of Miss Brandon, who warmly expressed her pleasure at seeing me, and her regret for my indisposition. We talked of the dancers; she named them to me, as in different sets they exhibited their skill in the light quadrille, or the graceful waltz. But it seemed that nothing was to proceed upon this

important evening in the ordinary course ; and that all things were determined to conspire to furnish matter for rumour and conversation ; for scarce had my indisposition ceased to be the subject of speculation, when Lady Orville was seen leaning on my arm apparently as much disturbed as I had been.

The fact was this: whilst talking with Miss Brandon, I observed a servant passing by with a letter, and enquiring for Lady Orville; I pointed to the spot where she was conversing with Moncrief. I heard the servant say as he gave her the note, “ The bearer will not leave the house : he says, my lady, he must be answered,

and that your ladyship knows this very night he is ruined if"—“ Speak lower, fellow,” said Moncrief angrily, and seeing Lady Orville excessively agitated, he left her and went out of the apartment. Lady Orville could not conquer the emotion by which she was overpowered. She made an effort; she endeavoured to smile; when the paleness of death overspread her countenance, and, beckoning to me, for she met my eyes, “ Take me hence,” she said; “ Oh! take me, nor let all London witness my misery and disgrace.”

“ Disgrace!” I repeated, almost overpowered by her words, but complying with her wish, “ lean on my

arm," I said, "I will take you out instantly;" she drew me along, though her step was feeble and tottering; she would follow Moncrief:—I wished to lead her to her mother. The staircase, superbly lighted and adorned with flowers, was crowded with domestics and spectators, and at the foot of the stairs were seated the band, which was playing loud and sweetly: there a wretched-looking man, with a desperate countenance, stood enveloped in a rough great coat, and Moncrief, with great anxiety, in stifled whispers, implored, menaced, requested him to be gone—it was in vain: he would speak to my lady, he said; and Lady Orville hesi-

tatingly assured me that, provided I would not forsake her, she would see him.

We had descended a few steps, when a servant followed us to inquire from Lady Denmont, whether Lady Orville was ill—"Tell my mother," she replied, "I am only gone for a moment to give an order; I am quite well—I shall soon return." "Mr. Hamilton," she said, in a faltering tone, "I am taking you from a scene of amusement to one of anguish—can you forgive me?" "Forgive you!" I replied; "forgive an angel for shewing me the example of humanity, of a charity, which none of the selfish amusements of this world can stifle?"

“You are striking a dagger into her heart in every word you speak,” said Moncrief, turning fiercely round and seizing from me that arm which it appeared to me heaven thus to support; “hold your prate and your sentences; look what you have done.” Lady Orville, in fact, had fainted. “Augusta,” said Moncrief with tenderness, “Augusta!” and with my assistance he supported her into an adjoining parlour, where the cloaks and shawls had been thrown upon the sofa, and where, upon a heap of them, we laid her. What a sight was this—a lifeless, lovely form upon a bed of coloured trappings, contrasting their vivid, varied tints with the pale-

ness of her cheek. Moncrief was calm;—he durst not call for assistance, least he should excite attention;—he bathed her temples with the water which he brought her, kept a strict watch on the door, only permitting the stern being, who was the cause of this disturbance, to be a witness of the scene.

By degrees Lady Orville recovered, raised herself, and sat upright; then trying to assume composure, she fixed her eyes mournfully on the man before her, and prepared to hear his reproaches.—“When the poor man drops in the streets from want,” he said, at length, breaking silence in a hollow tone, “the rich man says he

is an impostor: I will not presume, my lady, to judge you so harshly: I will not refuse to believe that Nature, though spurned so often from the resorts of Fashion, yet continues in some measure to influence the hearts of those who reject her." Moncrief darted an eye of fury on the man. "Let me turn him out," I cried,— "the wretch—the impious wretch who dares to utter——" "Let him speak," said Lady Orville, in a low, but firm tone, "let him say all he pleases; I deserve it."

"Madam," said the man, affected for a moment by her loveliness, such patience, such magnanimity, — "If it is your desire, I will postpone

my visit." — Lady Orville did not answer: "Far be it from me," he continued, "to judge you—beggared as I am by my trust in your countenance of innocent sweetness. I wish not to insult you, but when disease and famine—when aching limbs and motherless children cause distress—human nature cannot bear it. The great man pleads his nature as his excuse for every evil deed. I have by a year's imprisonment expiated the crime, your want of punctuality—your riot and extravagance led me to commit." "Hold—have mercy," Lady Orville interrupted him. "See," continued the man, pointing to her, "what gifts heaven has be-

stowed there—and yet that heart, in the midst of this splendour, must, if it beat at all, beat with self-reproach. Amongst the many whom you and your gay associates have brought to ruin, I am one of the most unfortunate—for I am disgraced. To save your honour, I suffered myself to become the sacrifice; I saw my wife's tears—heard my children's cries—but, faithful to the lady whose protection and benevolence had such a name, I trusted to your promise. The money due to me was a thousand pounds—the property I possessed was not half that sum. Deprived of all, without a friend on earth, I wrote daily to you for succour, nay for

justice: — an insolent porter turned me from your gate. I was advised to have recourse to the law—but your word alone had been my guarantee. She will remember me, I yet said—and I wept as I traced letter upon letter to one whom I still believed too generous to act as you have done. At length one night—it is terrible to me to recall it—temptation came across me. I was utterly destitute. I attempted a robbery—I was seized and prosecuted: I was convicted, but obtained a pardon after long confinement. My life was saved, but disgrace is stamped on me for ever. Three days ago I wrote to you again. My letter was

menacing—was desperate; but so was my situation. All yesterday—all this day I have awaited your answer; to-night the answer is given—a ball and supper, splendour, excess: this is my money—this is my sustenance. Take my heart's blood—take my life:—you have ruined me. My wife died, almost of want; my youngest boy lies famished and cold before me: if I apply for work, I am spurned. Are you not afraid of wearing, before the Almighty God who made you, those glittering baubles, which you must feel are the bread of my children? Give me but justice—I ask no charity. Your God is my God: we are the same before him. What

you have taken from me, that alone I claim : and if you are too poor to restore it, are you not too poor to wear this costly attire, to keep these liveried minions, to give this feast ?”

Struck with this unexpected history, I gazed alternately on the expiring figure of penitence and despair, whose tears, coursing each other down her cheeks, seemed to supplicate offended Heaven for forgiveness, and upon the sallow, haggard man before us. Moncrief and I remained in silence. The man then continued—
“ Your servants drive me from your door—they call me vagabond and thief ; and your steward came, in all

his insolence, but yesterday, sent as it seemed by your command, to insult me in my own house.”—“ Oh, not to insult, but to relieve.”—“ Possibly that was your intent ; but was it not insult, think you, to enter my miserable and bare walls, and ask me if the beggar named Colan lived there ? Was it not insult, do you suppose, to place a piece of money on the table, saying—you sent it—you, whom, if it is my will, I can expose as cruel, and as dishonest, to a wondering world ?

Lady Orville tried to conceal her tears—she looked upon me as if supplicating me not to judge her harshly. Moncrief spoke some time to the man

in a low tone of voice ; he then audibly requested him to depart now, and come again the next morning ; and with this request the man, who seemed somewhat satisfied with having expressed his indignation, now declared his willingness to comply. Lady Orville thanked Moncrief, as it struck me, coldly ; and turning to me, bade me compose myself, and not betray my agitation when I returned to the ball-room.

I shall never forget Moncrief's look upon both her and at me, when I turned round, and his dark eye met mine. It would have awakened the dead, and in truth it might have annihi-

ated the living. Lady Orville, without one other word, gave him her arm, and returned, I suppose, to her company; but I felt myself so much moved as to be unable to obey her injunction; and apprehensive of injuring her by my emotion I left the house, with the intention of instantly proceeding home. Before me I perceived the very man who had been the cause of so much disturbance; I overtook, and questioned him, and he then told me, that the gentleman had promised to pay him his whole demand, but had strictly enjoined him not to mention the circumstance. Upon receiving this in-

telligence I proceeded onwards to my uncle's, deeply meditating upon the melancholy lesson of the evening, and struck with admiration of Moncrief's calm and disinterested generosity.

END OF VOL. 1.

LONDON .

PRINTED BY S. AND R. BENTLEY, DORSET-STREET.

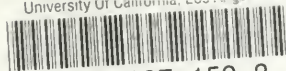
2155200

University of California Library
Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Phone Renewals
310/206-38

OCT 06 1997



L 007 387 159 2

